THE
AMERICAN WEST

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Cover: The world of the American desert encompasses a broad spectrum of environments, ranging from the surprisingly lush cactus forests of the Baja California peninsula to the moon-like landscape pictured here— an eleven-thousand-foot-high wasteland at the foot of California's White Mountains.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE CROUCH,
FROM THE FORTHCOMING AMERICAN WEST BOOK "DESERT COUNTRY"

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

IT IS ONE OF THE IRONIES of nineteenth-century maritime history that some of America's most hazardous navigational waters were located more than a thousand miles from the nearest seacoast—on the cantankerous, ever-changing "Big Muddy" or Missouri River.

Frontier artist George Caleb Bingham, in his 1849 genre painting "Watching the Cargo" (above), depicted the typical aftermath of mischance on the Missouri—a half-sunk steamboat, probably pierced through by a concealed snag. In all, perhaps three hundred river craft met similar fates.

Journalist Albert D. Richardson, cataloging the "terrors of Missouri navigation" in his 1867 book *West of the Mississippi,* claimed that "navigating the Missouri, at low water, is like putting a steamer upon dry land, and sending a boy ahead with a sprinkling pot."

Richardson colorfully described the river as "a little too thick to swim in, and not quite thick enough to walk on. . . . The shifting channel sometimes moves forty or fifty yards in a single week. . . . Thousands of [snags] rise above the surface, frequently so thick that a boat can hardly find room for passing. Floating logs are caught upon these upright posts; the water pours over them in little cascades until they collect waifs and form a great tangled heap of driftwood to be swept away by the first freshet. The *fatal* snags are hidden under water. . . . No sagacity or experience is proof against these unseen weapons, and one does not wonder at the wrinkled faces and premature gray hairs of pilots and captains. Even boats appear to share their terror. I could distinctly feel our steamer thrill with disgust when she ran upon a sand-bar, and shudder with horror at every snag grating against her keel."

Richardson noted that "compared with ocean vessels, these river steamers seem light and fragile as pasteboard, and if they take fire, they burn like tinder. But many run fifteen miles an hour with the current, carry enormous loads, and often pay for themselves in a single year."

Such were the dangers and rewards of steamboating on the Missouri a century ago. All of which serves as an introduction to the interesting saga of the *Bertrand,* an account of which appears on pages 18–25 of this issue.

THE
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Wilderness Fugue

Lincoln's Journey to Manhood on the Kentucky and Indiana Frontier

by Stephen B. Oates

HE WOULD NOT REMEMBER much about Kentucky—and nothing at all about the log-cabin farm on the south fork of Nolin Creek, a hardscrabble place where he was born on February 12, 1809, and christened Abraham after his grandfather. His earliest recollection involved their subsequent homestead on Knob Creek several miles to the north. The scene was etched in his memory like a photograph: his father, Thomas Lincoln, a stout, barrel-chested man, hoeing down in the creek bottom while little Abraham followed along, dropping pumpkin seeds between hills of corn. And there was the Sunday not long after that when a storm blew up, attacking the countryside with doomsday thunder and pelting rain. Then a flash flood came roaring down the ravines, washing away the pumpkin seeds and the corn and the topsoil itself. He recalled, too, the time he almost drowned in the creek: a small boy thrashing desperately in the water, a neighbor boy wading in just in time to save his life.

Storms and deaths, his mother would say, were part of the workings of God, mysterious and incomprehensible. His tall, dark-haired mother, her eyes like pools of sadness, reared him and sister Sarah with a melancholy affection. Unable to read, she recited prayers for the children and quoted memorized passages from the family Bible. Incapable of even writing her name, Nancy Hanks Lincoln signed legal documents with her mark. Yet if she could not teach the children their letters, she did instruct them in the primitive Baptist doctrine of fatalism in which she gloried. "Nothing can hinder the execution of the designs of Providence," the creed went. "What is to be will be and we can do nothing about it." That was why Abraham was still alive, why he had not drowned that time in the creek: because it was *not his time,* because Providence had *other designs.* But with the Lincoln's third child, God had decreed otherwise. The child, who had died of some unnamed affliction, was buried in a small grave visible from the Lincoln cabin.

In contrast to Nancy, Thomas Lincoln was a convivial fellow, fond of good company, a popular storyteller, and a "leader of grocery-store dialogue." As one settler recalled, "his chief earthly pleasure was to crack and tell stories to a group of chums who paid homage to his wit by giving him the closest attention and the loudest applause." Thomas descended from a long line of Lincolns, one of whom had migrated from England to Massachusetts back in 1637. Originally Quakers, the Lincolns had moved to Pennsylvania, then to Virginia, and finally out to Kentucky where Abraham —Thomas's father—had been killed by an Indian. Young Abraham had heard the tale of Grandfather's death over and over, since Thomas enjoyed describing it in the evenings around a fire. Although myths were to flourish about Thomas as a lazy ne'er-do-well, he was in fact a hardworking carpenter and farmer who had the respect of his neighbors. He stayed sober, accumulated land, paid his taxes, sat on juries, and served on the county slave patrol. Though he came from a family of small slaveholders and undoubtedly shared the anti-Negro prejudice of nearly all whites of his generation, he came to doubt the peculiar institution itself. Indeed, he associated with a group of antislavery Baptists in his neighborhood who had walked out of the regular Baptist church during a stormy debate over slavery; they had established a separatist church that not only renounced the peculiar institution but eschewed all written creeds and official church organization, relying on the Bible as the sole rule of faith. In 1816, Thomas and Nancy Lincoln united with the separatist church, and sang and prayed with its antislavery ministers.

Nancy, for her part, had a confused and cloudy past. In fact, shortly after she married Thomas—this in 1806, in Elizabethtown, Kentucky—gossips started whispering about her dubious parentage. They said she was a bastard child, said Lucy Hanks had begotten her by some so-called Virginia nobleman. The question about her birth was to gather frills over the years until even her son was to doubt her legitimacy and to become conspicuously reticent about his mother and her past. Yet in mood and appearance he resembled Nancy more than he did his father.

So he never knew much—and never tried to know much—about his parents' ancestry, disparaging both as products

Eastman Johnson's famous painting "Boyhood of Lincoln" recalls the sensitive backwoods youth who—though he could barely "read, write, and cipher to the rule of three"—dreamed of a life beyond that of axe and hoe.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MUSEUM OF ART, BEQUEST OF HENRY C. LEWIS

DETAIL OF ORIGINAL BY W. J. BENNETT AFTER GEORGE HARVEY: YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY, MABEL BRADY GARVAN COLLECTION

"Burning Fallen Trees in a Girdled Clearing": for restless Thomas Lincoln and his family, home was a succession of log cabins on the fringes of the wilderness, life a daily struggle against nature and poverty.

"of undistinguished families." Later, he claimed that because his father was "left an orphan at the age of six years, in poverty, and in a new country, he became a wholly uneducated man; which I suppose is the reason why I know so little of our family history."

He had only random recollections, then, of his grandfather's death, of the Knob Creek farm, of the first exhilarating brush with education—two brief sessions in 1815 and 1816, when he and Sarah could be spared from the family chores in the winter and allowed to walk through the scrub trees and creek bottoms over to the log schoolhouse on the Cumberland Road. Here he learned his ABCs "by littles," his teacher a fifty-two-year-old Catholic slaveholder. Sister Sarah, two years older than Abraham, was a plump girl with dark hair and gray eyes, a grown-up child of nine who admonished her brother to behave himself. By now Abraham was "a tall spider of a boy," as a neighbor recalled him, who "had his due proportion of harmless mischief."

Then came the move to Indiana that fall, the Lincolns uprooting themselves for reasons the boy only vaguely understood—an error in his father's land titles, threatened lawsuits, and something about slavery Abraham did not fully comprehend. His father announced that they would be better off in the free territory of Indiana, where a number of Kentuckians had already migrated and where land laws and surveys were more exact than in Kentucky. So "like a piece of human flotsam thrown forward by the surging tide of immigration," as one writer phrased it, Thomas Lincoln took his family across the Ohio River to find a better life in the Indiana wilderness.

They reached their new claim sometime in December 1816, the very month Indiana entered the Union as a free state. The claim was situated in what was called the Little Pigeon Creek community, in a remote backwoods some sixteen miles northwest of Troy and the Ohio River. It was the wildest region the boy had ever seen, an area of dense forests and grapevine thickets so entangled that travelers often had to cut their way with axes. With wolves howling in the distance and a winter fog hanging in the woods, the Lincolns threw up a three-corner shelter until Thomas could construct a permanent cabin. Here they endured their first winter in Indiana, huddled in furs around a whipping fire in the open side of the lean-to.

In February, a few days after the boy's eighth birthday,

the family moved into a new log cabin, with a packed earth floor, a stone fireplace, and a loft where Abraham slept. Not long after that he stood inside the doorway and shot a wild turkey as it approached. It was a traumatic experience for him, for he loved birds and animals—and hated killing them, even for food. He would never like to hunt or fish again.

There was little time for that anyway: come spring, his father put an axe in his hands and sent him out to clear fields, split fence rails, and chop firewood. He helped Thomas clear a farm out of the timber, establish a carpenter's trade, and try to make the name of Lincoln mean something in the neighborhood. It seemed to the boy that he was almost constantly handling his axe or struggling behind a plow or thrashing wheat with a flail and carrying it down to the mill in Troy.

In 1817 some of Nancy's relatives—Thomas and Elizabeth Sparrow—joined the Lincolns on Little Pigeon Creek, riding a wave of immigration onto the Indiana frontier. With them came Dennis Hanks, illegitimate son of another of Nancy's aunts, a congenial, semiliterate youth of nineteen. For some reason Dennis took a dislike to Thomas Lincoln and later falsely characterized him as a slow and shiftless oaf who neglected his family. But Dennis loved Nancy, describing her as kind, good, and affectionate—"the most affectionate I ever saw." Despite their age difference, he and Abraham chummed around together; on Sundays they ran, jumped, and wrestled, and joined Sarah and the adults in singing "how tasteless the hour when Jesus no longer I see." Abraham tried his best to keep a tune, Dennis said, but "he never could sing much."

The following summer an epidemic of the dreaded "milk sick" swept through the area. Many settlers died, including Thomas and Elizabeth Sparrow, and then Nancy, too, fell sick and died. She was only thirty-four years old. While Thomas fashioned a black cherry coffin, the dead woman lay in the same room where the children ate and slept. Then came the funeral on a windy hill, with Thomas, Sarah, Abraham, and Dennis Hanks huddled around the grave. In later years Abraham said little about his mother's death, as reticent about that as he was about her life and family background. But he once referred to her as a wrinkled woman, with "withered features" and "a want of teeth."

DENNIS HANKS now moved into the Lincoln cabin and shared the loft with Abraham. Twelve-year-old Sarah tried to fill her mother's place, to make and mend clothes for the menfolk, to clean, cook, and wash for them. But it was hard without a woman, and the Lincoln homestead sank into gloom and squalor. Then in 1819 there occurred another scrape with death: a horse kicked Abraham in the head "and apparently killed him for a time," as he put it later. The boy survived, but that same year Thomas Lincoln headed back to Kentucky and returned in a couple of months with a new wife—a former widow named Sarah Bush Johnston—and her three children. Though "Sally" was ten years younger than Thomas, they had known one another for almost a decade. She had married Daniel Johnston, Elizabethtown's jailer, and had made her home in the stone jail where she cooked for the prisoners and reared her children. Since her husband's death, she had lived in a modest cabin which she had bought herself. Thomas found her there, proposed, paid her debts, and married her in a Methodist ceremony.

Tall, straight, and fair-skinned, Sally could not write and probably could not read either. But she was loquacious and proud; she radiated sunshine into the Lincoln home, and she raised Sarah and Abraham as her own. Because of her warm and fair-minded ways, Abraham became very attached to her. "She proved a good and kind mother to A.," he remarked in later years, and referred to Sally as his "angel mother."

Thomas and Sally Lincoln were hospitable folk, eager to help newcomers and to visit with neighbors who came their way. Thanks to Sally, Thomas was his old self again, cracking jokes with visitors and expatiating on the opportunities available in Indiana if a man took advantage of them, such as plenty of good, cheap land—the government was practically giving it away at $1.25 an acre. Eventually Thomas bought one hundred acres and raised stock and grain for market. The country was filling up with settlers, most of them southern in origin, and by 1820 some forty families were homesteading in the Lincoln neighborhood. The richest and most prominent was James Gentry, a North Carolinian who sired a brood of eight children, amassed a large farm, and built a trading post called Gentryville. Though not so eminent as Gentry, Thomas was a popular yarn-spinner and enjoyed considerable status as a skilled carpenter, and his cupboards and furniture embellished the cabins of his neighbors.

As a tribute to his carpentry, the local Baptists called on him to supervise the construction of a meetinghouse on a nearby farm. After he had completed the building, Thomas and Sally united with the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, and Thomas himself became a trustee. Through his influence young Abraham got a job as sexton, charged with sweeping out the place and furnishing it with candles. The preacher was known for washing his feet and inveighing against slavery, and Abraham no doubt heard some of his anti-slavery sermons. But the boy never became a member of his father's church.

Thomas reared his son to be a farmer and even hired him out to other homesteaders from time to time. But Abraham disliked farm work, prompting some to remark that he was "lazy, awful lazy." Others recalled, however, that he toiled "hard and faithful," and was "mighty conscientious" about getting in a full day for 25 cents, which he gave his father, who legally commanded his wages until he came of age. If

LINCOLN THE WRESTLER" BY FLETCHER RANSOM. 1938. COURTESY OF CHICAGO & ILLINOIS MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY

Though Abraham grew to be more than six feet tall and was gangly in appearance, the rigors of frontier life tempered him into a superb athlete. At New Salem, Illinois (above), he would gain local fame for his skill as a wrestler.

manual labor did not exactly excite him, Abraham nevertheless learned a great deal about the business of farming. And he became a master axeman. "My, how he could chop," said one of his companions. "His axe would flash and bite into a sugar tree or sycamore; down it would come. If you heard him felling trees in a clearing, you would say there were three men at work, the way the trees fell."

By the time he was twelve or thirteen, the boy reflected his father's conversational habit and love for anecdote, entertaining fellow hands with a procession of hilarious stories. He also liked to mount a stump and mimic preachers and politicians. His jokes were as raw and pungent as the frontier he lived in, as were the tunes he sang with his comrades—raunchy ballads about one Barbara Allen or about the silk merchant's daughter, which left them howling with delight. Once they acquired a copy of *Quin's Jests,* a collection of lubricious repartee, and the boys giggled and whooped as Lincoln read the book aloud in the forest.

At other times Lincoln was a serious, brooding youth with a driving passion to understand which set him apart from his friends. He got irritated when adults spoke to him in ways he could not comprehend—"that always disturbed my temper," he recalled. When Thomas chatted and argued with neighbors, Abraham was "a silent and attentive observer," Sally Lincoln related, "never speaking or asking questions till they were gone and then he must understand everything —even to the smallest thing—minutely and exactly. He would then repeat it over to himself again and again—sometimes in one form or another, and when it was fixed in his mind to suit him, he became easy, and he never lost that fact or his understanding of it."

Between his eleventh and fifteenth years he went to school irregularly, attending brief sessions between winter harvest and spring plowing. All told, he accumulated about a year of formal education. These were "blab" schools he went to, so-called because pupils studied aloud so that the teacher—rod in hand—could grade their progress. Lincoln came to school with an old arithmetic book under one arm, dressed in a raccoon cap and buckskin, his pants so short they exposed six inches of his calves. In later years he scoffed at the instruction he received in Indiana, insisting that "there was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Still somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three; but that was all."

Well, that was not quite all. He developed an interest in poetry and even wrote some himself, recording some playful lines in a homemade copybook:

Abraham Lincoln
his hand and pen
he will be good but
god knows when

Abraham Lincoln is my nam[e]
And with my pen I wrote the same
I wrote in both hast[e] and speed
and left it here for fools to read

He took pride in his penmanship, loved to sketch letters in the dust and snow, loved to construct words and sentences in his copybook. He became the family scribe and wrote letters not only for his parents but for neighbors as well. It was an invaluable experience, obliging the boy to see the world through the eyes of other people.

And he enjoyed reading, too, losing himself in the adventures of *Robinson Crusoe* or the selected fables of *Dilworth's Spelling-Book*. Books were rare in frontier Indiana, but Lincoln consumed the few that he found, reading the same volume over and over. He would bring his book to the field and would read at the end of each plow furrow while the horse was getting its breath; and he would read again at the noon break. Perhaps his favorite volume was Parson Weems's *Life of Washington*, which sketched the American story with a romantic brush, mythologizing the Founding Fathers as immortal statesmen who endowed America with "the Genius of Liberty." Young Lincoln was entranced with the fabled beginnings and star-flung destiny of the young Republic. And Weems's description of the Revolutionary War—especially the Battle of Trenton—so thrilled the boy that he could almost hear the rattle of musketry and smell the acrid scent of gunpowder in the Indiana wind. As he labored in the fields, he dreamed of Washington and Jefferson—and came to idolize them as heroic individuals who had shaped the course of history.

The more he read, of course, the more it fired his own ambitions. Surely there was more to life than plowing fields and chopping wood, more than living and dying here in Indiana, which he thought of as "unpoetical as any spot on earth." Yet this same unpoetical spot was having an ineradicable influence on Lincoln, molding and marking him in ways he could neither erase nor forget. For he came to manhood in a rural backwoods where people accepted the most excruciating hardships as commonplace. Where they went for seasons without baths, saw whole families wiped out in epidemics, endured a lifetime of backbreaking toil for the sake of rearing children and getting ahead. Where people relied on corn whiskey, fire-and-brimstone revivals, political discussion, and bawdy jokes to ease the painful grind of day-to-day existence. Where they ordered their lives around a morass of superstitions, believing that one must plant and harvest according to the stages of the moon. That a dog howling in the distance meant that death would visit one's family. That anybody who brought a shovel into a cabin would go out with a coffin. That a bird lighting on a window sill—or flying inside a home—signaled the approach of sorrow. And that dreams were filled with hidden meanings, were auguries of triumphs and calamities.

And then there was the accent—a southern Indiana dialect that would barb much of Lincoln's own speech all his life. Like his neighbors, young Lincoln said "howdey" to visitors. He "sot" down and "stayed a spell." He came "outen" a cabin and "yearned" his wages and "made a heap." He "cum" from "whar" he had been. He was "hornswoggled" into doing something against his better judgment. He "keered" for his friends and "heered" the latest news. He pointed to "yonder" stream and addressed the head of a committee as "Mr. Cheermun." And he got an "eddication" in log-cabin schools and "larned" about adversity, self-reliance, and the necessity for mutual cooperation with his neighbors.

And he learned to live with death, with madness, with the bizarre and macabre. When he was sixteen he witnessed a hideous spectacle that so affected him that he later set it to verse. This was the incredible seizure of Matthew Gentry, one of James Gentry's boys and Lincoln's schoolmate. Young Lincoln saw it happen. He was there when Matthew became "unaccountably furiously mad." His eyes bulged; he tried to maim himself; he attacked first his father and then his mother, all the while gurgling maniacally. For days afterward Lincoln brooded over Matthew's fit. Why, for what reason, had this "fortune-favored" youth been so stricken? Lincoln lay awake at night, recalling Matthew's face, trying to understand the "pangs that kill the mind." And though Matthew seemed less distracted as time went by, Lincoln retained a morbid fascination with Matthew's condition. Lincoln would stand in the forest near the Gentry place, listening as Matthew "begged, and swore, and wept, and prayed." And sometimes Lincoln would wake early in the morning and steal off to Gentry's house, to "drink in" Matthew's plaintive song, when even the "trees with the spell seemed sorrowing angels. . . ."

AT SIXTEEN he was over six feet tall, a gangly youth with coarse black hair, large ears, a leathery complexion, and a hawkish face. His legs gave him his height, so long that he seemed to stand on stilts. But if he looked awkward, all arms and legs, he was in actuality a superb athlete, one of the best wrestlers and fastest runners in his age group. His arm muscles were like cables, so strong that he could seize an axe by the handle and hold it straight out at arm's length.

Emotionally he was given to intense oscillations of mood, was "witty, sad, and reflective by turns," as one settler re-

"PIONEER TRANSPORTATION" BY FLETCHER RANSOM, 1941. COURTESY OF CHICAGO & ILLINOIS MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY

When a flatboat Abraham had helped build got stuck on a Sangamon River dam, the young boatman amazed onlookers with his ingenuity in freeing it. Here he stands with the auger he used to drain the waterlogged craft.

called. Though laconic by nature, he hungered for male companionship and liked to visit Gentry's store, to quip and swap stories with the men. He knew he was "gawky" looking and so "didn't take much truck with girls," as a companion put it. When he was around girls, he covered up a painful shyness by acting the clown. Because of his appearance "all the young girls of my age made fun of Abe," one woman remembered. But she was certain "Abe" didn't mind because he was such a good fellow.

Though Lincoln could be good-humored like his father, there was nevertheless an estrangement between them that would last until Thomas's death. Dennis Hanks blamed it on Thomas, claiming that Thomas thought Abraham was ruining himself with education and that he beat the youth for reading books. According to others, though, Sally Lincoln insisted that Abraham pursue his studies, and Thomas Lincoln did not interfere. Still others maintained that it was Thomas who urged Lincoln to attend school and get his learning. "Old Tom couldn't read himself," one settler recorded, "but he wuz proud that Abe could, and many a time he'd brag about how smart Abe wuz to the folks around about." Whichever view is true, Dennis was undoubtedly right when he declared that father and son never understood one another. Probably Thomas felt both respect and resentment for a son who read books and wrote poetry, moving toward a world of the mind Thomas could neither share nor comprehend. And young Lincoln, for his part, had some hostility—all mixed up with love, rivalry, and ambition—for his father's intellectual limitations. Later Lincoln remarked that his father "never did more in the way of writing than to bunglingly sign his own name."

At the age of seventeen, Lincoln left home for a time and worked on a ferry at the confluence of the Anderson and Ohio rivers. Two years later his sister died: round, gray-eyed Sarah, who had half-mothered him all these years. He had seen her married off to Aaron Grigsby, whom Lincoln had never liked, and now on a cold, January day in 1828 she lay dead from trying to bear Grigsby's child. And so another funeral, another round of prayers, another coffin: twenty-one-year-old Sarah, her stillborn baby in her arms, buried under a sandstone slab in a new cemetery by the church Thomas Lincoln had built. *For nothing can hinder the designs of Providence. For whatever will be will be. . . .*

In April 1828, Abraham contracted with James Gentry to

take a boatload of farm produce down to New Orleans. It was a welcome opportunity to get away from Indiana, away from the memory and sorrow of Sarah's death. Sometime that month he and Allen Gentry—one of James's sons—shoved off from Rockport and guided their flatboat down the placid waters of the Ohio. At last they came to the Mississippi and headed southward in its tempestuous currents, tugging on their slender sweeps to avoid snags and sandbars, passing occasional flatboats and smoking steamers. For most of the 1,200-mile journey, the banks were monotonous variations of bluffs and forests, but below Natchez the trees were festooned with Spanish moss, giving the woods an aura of ineffable sadness.

Presently they passed Baton Rouge and anchored at a river plantation where they commenced trading their cargo for sugar, cotton, and tobacco. One night seven slaves from a nearby plantation attacked the flatboat, but the youths fought them furiously hand-to-hand. Though both were hurt some in the melee, they drove the blacks away, weighed anchor, and set out for New Orleans as fast as they could go.

When they reached their destination, they were incredulous at what they saw: the wharves were teeming with activity, with over a thousand flatboats tied up there and whites and slaves alike loading their produce into carts and wagons, produce that came from Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio and that would soon be loaded on square-rigged sailing ships bound for ports around the world. After trading off their own cargo, the boys made their way along the levees, piled high with cotton and sugar, and roamed the narrow streets of New Orleans, taking in its mixture of Southern and Old World cultures. Now they were in the historic French Quarter, marveling at the picturesque homes with their painted windows, iron grillwork, and second-story porches. Now they were passing the slave markets where unhappy blacks—the men on one side and the women on the other—were being bought and sold like cattle. And then there were the sultry nights, when dives along the waterfront roared with drunken rivermen, and when women of the evening advertised themselves in doorways and windows, offering to help youths lose their virtue for a drink and a fee.

Finally it was time to go, time to leave this complex and unforgettable city, and return to the prosaic farms of Indiana. But the trip home was not so mundane as the youths might have expected: they made a good part of it by steamboat, chugging upriver like a couple of young entrepreneurs. At last, three months after they had set out, they landed at Rockport and made their way back to Little Pigeon Creek, where young Lincoln dutifully gave his father the $25 he had earned for his labors.

Sometime that summer or winter, Lincoln began hanging around the log courthouses in Rockport and Boonville. A sort of legal buff, he watched transfixed as young country lawyers wooed juries, cross-examined witnesses, delivered impassioned summations. He listened, too, as old-timers sat on the steps of the courthouses, spitting tobacco juice and discussing the latest trials and the capricious workings of the law—the verdict a jury might reach, the sentence a judge might hand down. It was all very exciting to him, a challenging new world that made his adrenaline flow. He was so thrilled, in fact, that he borrowed and read the *Revised Statutes of Indiana.* He also studied the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, observing as he did how frequently Indiana lawyers referred to them.

In March of 1830, Lincoln's father decided to emigrate west from Indiana to Illinois. John Hanks—a counsin on Nancy's side—had settled there and was writing so ecstatically about the prospects that Thomas's head began to swim. He was doing all right in Indiana—even had a new house under construction—but Illinois seemed too promising to resist. And both Sally and Dennis Hanks wanted to go. So Thomas sold his holdings for $500 and uprooted his family again. Although Abraham was twenty-one now and entitled to keep his wages, he went along with his father. Maybe Illinois would not be so unpoetical as Indiana. Maybe he could find something there—a job, an enterprise—that would measure up to his ambition. Abraham drove one of the wagons himself, lost in reflection while the axles squealed like violins.

The Lincolns relocated in central Illinois, on a windswept prairie some ten miles west of Decatur. Here Abraham helped his father erect another log cabin, plow ten acres of farmland, split fence rails, and plant corn. That autumn everybody on the Lincoln claim fell sick with the ague, a malarial fever attended by soaring temperatures and violent shakes. Then, in December, a blizzard came raging across the prairie, piling snow high against the Lincoln cabin. Then it rained, a freezing downpour that covered the snow with a layer of ice. Now a wind came screaming out of the northwest, driving snow and ice over the land in blinding swirls. Cows, horses, and deer sank through the crust and froze there or were eaten by wolves. For nine weeks the temperature held at twelve below zero. Settlers called it the winter of the "deep snow," the worst they had ever known.

During the slow winter days, young Lincoln mulled over with John Hanks and John Johnston—Sally's boy—a scheme that might make some money. They would hire themselves out to a speculator named Denton Offutt, who would pay them to take another boatload of cargo down to New Orleans, whose sweltering weather would be a welcome relief from the winter of Illinois. They would join Offutt in nearby Springfield, Lincoln decided, once "the snow should go off."

When the snow melted that March, rivers overflowed and floods washed across the prairie. Though travel was perilous, Lincoln could wait no longer. He was ready to set out on his own, to head south while Thomas and Sally Lincoln moved to another homestead in Coles County. With Hanks

and Johnston, young Lincoln paddled a canoe down the Sangamon River and then slogged to Springfield through mud and rivulets of water. They found Offutt at Buckhorn Tavern, swigging whiskey with an arm around an acquaintance. He was a "wild, harum-scarum kind of man," settlers recalled, "who always had his eyes open to the main chance." However, he told Lincoln, he had somehow failed to secure a flatboat for the New Orleans venture. But could the boys not chop logs on government land and make one of their own? They left Offutt to his drinking and started fashioning a boat on the Sangamon River. When he felt like it, Lincoln did the cooking. When he didn't, he took his meals at Caleb Carman's cabin nearby. At first Carman thought Lincoln "a greenhorn, tho after half hour's conversation with him I found him no greenhorn."

In late April or early May of 1831, the flatboatmen headed along the Sangamon River, bound for New Orleans with a cargo of corn, live hogs, and barreled pork. Offutt was with them, forecasting a time when they would all be on easy street, eating three squares a day and swilling expensive whiskey. By now the floods had receded and the river was so low that Lincoln had to steer the flatboat carefully along the channel. Presently, some twenty miles northwest of Springfield, they came to a small village called New Salem, where a mill dam obstructed the river. The flatboat ground across the dam—and then stuck about halfway over, filling slowly with water that poured in over the down-tilting stern. As a crowd gathered on the bank to watch, the tallest flatboatman stood on the dam and tried to pry the water-laden boat over. A villager observed that he was dressed "very rough," wearing blue-jean breeches, a buckeye chip hat, and a cotton shirt with alternate blue-and-white stripes.

When the raft would not budge, the tall flatboatman got an idea. He helped the crew move part of the cargo to the bank and shove the rest forward to balance the raft. Then he fetched a hand drill from the village, bored a hole in the bow to let the water out, plugged the hole, and eased the boat across the dam.

The spectators were amazed at his ingenuity and so was Offutt, who boasted that he would construct a boat with rollers on it to ride over shoals and dams. "By thunder," he declared, with Lincoln in charge "she would have to go." Actually Offutt had a better plan than that: he was certain that the Sangamon River could be navigated by steamboats and that New Salem would become a boomtown. Think of the profits that could be made here in trade and speculation! Before he left, Offutt made arrangements to rent the mill and open a general store. He then hired Lincoln to work as his clerk, saying he had taken a liking to the ingenious young man and wanted to "turn him to account." Lincoln accepted the job with alacrity and high hopes: now he would be free of manual labor and have a respectable position that required some intelligence. At the same time, Lincoln may have had his sights on something higher still. One villager, who noted the six inches between the bottom of Lincoln's pants and top of his socks, asked what he would do if he had money. According to the villager, Lincoln said he would like to study law.

The crew climbed aboard the flatboat and moved downriver, away from the dam and the crowd and the little village on the bluff. Just three months later, the tall flatboatman returned to New Salem, having completed his second New Orleans journey, and made a flying trip to Coles County to see his father and Sally. And though he had the stamp of the frontier all over him, he had an aspiration for high station in life that burned in him like a furnace, an ambition that would carry him beyond New Salem and into the Illinois state legislature at the age of twenty-five, that would make him a successful lawyer and an eloquent and visionary orator, that would take him on to Congress, the White House, the Civil War, and the rendezvous with his own portentous dreams at Ford's Theater.

For now, though, he disparaged himself as a "friendless, uneducated, penniless boy" who had finally "separated from his father."

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

This article is adapted from my biography in progress, *With Malice Toward None: A Life of Abraham Lincoln*, to be published by Harper & Row. On the basis of my own original research and modern Lincoln scholarship, I have tried to portray Lincoln as realistically as possible, showing him as a complex, paradoxical, and richly human individual. In preparing this chapter of his life, I utilized Lincoln's own autobiographies and associated material in the nine-volume *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by Roy P. Basler and others (1953–1955), and drew from letters and recollections germane to Lincoln's early years in the Herndon-Weik Papers, Archives Division of the Library of Congress. In addition, I used pertinent matter in *The Lincoln Papers*, edited by David C. Mearns (1948); *Herndon's Life of Lincoln*, edited by Paul M. Angle (1961); *Lincoln Day by Day*, edited by Earl Schenck Miers (three volumes, 1960); and *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood* and *Lincoln's Youth: the Indiana Years*, both by Louis A. Warren (1926 and 1959). "Some Thoughts on Nancy Hanks Lincoln" by Betty J. Atkinson in the Fall 1971 issue of *Lincoln Herald* and *The Lincoln Nobody Knows* by Richard N. Current (1958) have excellent discussions of the controversies surrounding Lincoln's boyhood, parents, and ancestry. I also found helpful information in Albert J. Beveridge's *Abraham Lincoln, 1800–1859* (two volumes, 1928), Reinhard H. Luthin's *The Real Abraham Lincoln* (1960), Benjamin Thomas's *Lincoln's New Salem* (1966), John J. Duff's *A. Lincoln, Prairie Lawyer* (1960), and numerous other published sources, biographies, and monographs.

Stephen B. Oates, *a member of the history department at the University of Massachusetts, has contributed several previous articles to* THE AMERICAN WEST. *He is author of eight books, including* Visions of Glory *(1970),* To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown *(1970), and* The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion *(1975). In 1972 the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation awarded him a fellowship to continue his study of Lincoln.*

"Lincoln the Rail-splitter": destiny and a burning ambition would carry Abraham all the way to the White House, but the frontier he was leaving behind had molded and marked him in ways he could neither erase nor forget.

DETAIL OF ORIGINAL, BY FLETCHER RANSOM, 1936, COURTESY OF CHICAGO & ILLINOIS MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY

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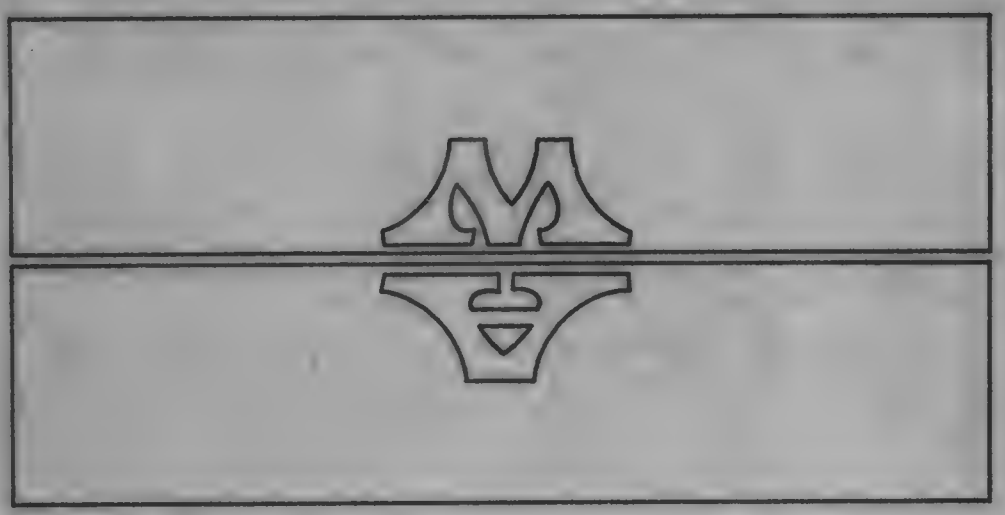

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THE AMERICAN WEST

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I Was a Cowboy Once

(A true story)

by C. T. Gilbreath

Illustrations by Lindee Climo

THE YEAR was 1922. I was a student at Tulane University. It was at or near the close of school when the dean called me into his office and bestowed upon me the "Purple Heart of Higher Learning."

He kicked me out!

He said that I didn't seem to grasp the situation—that I was "a square peg in a round hole" . . . and would I walk quietly away at the close of school and not look back?

So I was in the class of '24 but kicked out in '22!

When college closed I was confronted with the problem of getting to my brother's ranch in the Texas Panhandle. My father had provided for my transportation; yet somehow, during the process of taking my girl to the fraternity house party, these funds had become so dissipated that I barely had enough money left to ship my suitcase to Amarillo and pay my streetcar fare to the railroad station.

Yet when the train pulled out I was aboard. I didn't have all the comforts enjoyed by the boys in the Pullman coaches, but I was riding just as fast. I was standing in front of the baggage car and just back of the coal car in the spot known in hobo vernacular as the "blinds."

Upon arriving at Amarillo (my suitcase had arrived on the same train), I bought a ticket for Hereford. There I was met by my brother, Jeff, who surmised that I "looked sort of dirty." I changed the subject.

I stayed at Jeff's Hereford home for a few days of rest;

then he drove me to his large cattle ranch south of Dimmitt.

The ranch house was a two-story affair. The Bright family lived in the downstairs part. The two bedrooms upstairs were for cowhands and fellows like me. The house had a fence around it. In the front yard and off to one side was the privy. I had never seen a privy located in the front yard before; yet the logic behind this was sound—it was downwind of the house. All traffic in and out of the house was through the backyard, and no one ever entered the house from the front, not even on Sunday afternoon, or when company came—which it never did.

A short distance beyond the backyard fence was the windmill. The water pumped from the well emptied into a large wooden barrel from which the drinking water was dipped. The barrel overflowed into a large metal tank some ten feet in diameter. Here the cattle and horses drank. The tank overflowed into a large dirt tank or pond. Here the pigs drank, and the cattle and horses waded and slopped around in warm weather.

Not far away was a corral, and inside this enclosure was a windbreak with a roof on it. The entire structure was surrounded by fence posts with four strands of barbed wire. Beyond that was outer space.

This was the Plains country; all around, as far as the eye could see, the land was level. When you looked out, you didn't see anything because there was nothing to see—or so it seemed. However, something actually was out there. Your next door neighbor's house was there. Where? Out yonder a ways. But it was over the curve of horizon, and you couldn't see it unless you climbed on top of the roof.

There were no trees on the Plains. This meant no firewood. Yet the kitchen stove was a wood-burner. For fuel we burned "cow chips" which, in case you city folks don't know, is dried cow manure.

You could get a real good fire going with these things, but it took a lot of them—not much mileage in each cake. It was therefore necessary to keep a large supply on hand—and dry. This was where the back porch earned its keep. The cow chips were stacked on the porch against the wall. Only a small pile of cakes was stored in the kitchen next to the stove.

There was no smokehouse in which to keep the meat, hams, sides of bacon, sausage, and so on. The meat was also kept on the back porch. But they didn't just pile this meat on top of the cow chips as you might expect. They hung it from the ceiling *above* the chips.

Later that first day Jeff drove back to Hereford. I remained. I was to share an upstairs room with Jimmy Mendel, a cowhand. Old man Tom Johnston and his son, Joe, shared the other room.

We had supper with the Bright family. Mr. Bright was the ranch foreman. In the Plains of Texas, darkness follows rapidly upon the heels of sundown. Almost immediately after supper I was surprised to see Joe Johnston start taking off his clothes as he walked toward the windmill. I wondered if I was supposed to do likewise. . . .

"Joe, why are you taking off your clothes?" I was curious.

"Taking a bath. You can too if you want."

He proceeded to the large metal tank that was used for watering the horses. Here he completed the task of taking off his clothes and tossed them into the tank, then stepped in himself. After washing he stepped out, dressed, put on the fresh clothes he had placed near the well earlier, and started back to the porch.

"But Joe," I cautioned, "you forgot your clothes in the horse trough."

"Didn't forget. I'll take them out tomorrow night about this time. The water soaks the dirt out of them."

"That's the way you wash clothes in the cattle country?"

"The way I do it. They'll look just as dirty when you take them out, but they won't smell so bad. I do this about twice a week. Sweat doesn't start stinking until the third day, you know."

I didn't know . . . but I was learning.

Ranchers went to bed rather soon after supper in those days. Jimmy and I retired to our room and lit the lamp. We were to share a bed. There was a chamber pot in the corner; so if we had the urge before morning we wouldn't wake up the Bright family going down the squeaky stairs on our way to the privy in the front yard. And using the second-story window wasn't a procedure smiled upon anymore by the better people.

In due course we blew out the lamp and turned in. Jimmy was next to the wall, with me next to the lamp. I couldn't get to sleep for quite a while. I wasn't used to turning in so early. I don't recall whether I actually dozed off or not, but somehow I was restless. I wanted to flounder around, but that would disturb Jimmy. There seemed to be something odd; I felt downright unalone. Sure Jimmy was there, but I felt more unalone than just with Jimmy. And you can't ever get to sleep feeling like that.

I couldn't stand it any longer. After easing out of the bed, I lit the lamp.

I'll have you know we had company!

Bedbugs!

All over the bed and Jimmy, and some on me.

I brushed them off myself and called to Jimmy. He dragged his hand over his face a couple of times and asked me what was the matter.

"Matter? Hell, man, can't you see what's the matter? Look at the bugs. Watch them run."

"Yeah, they always back into the cracks when you light the lamp. They don't like the light."

You'd think they were pals of his, and I guess they were.

"But what are we going to do about it?"

"We aren't going to do anything about it. They live here."

"You mean we all live together?"

"Yep. Don't pay no attention to them. All the old houses

around here are filled with bedbugs. You'll get used to them."

Jimmy explained that they would bite some and would eat a little of your blood, but then they left some, too, which was considerate. Jimmy called it "the chain of survival." He said that the pigs eat corn and slop; we eat the pigs, and the bedbugs eat us. He didn't know who or what ate the bedbugs.

IN THE FALL, after the farm work was done, there were the cattle to be looked after. There was cutting, branding, dehorning, and, in the winter, feeding. The cow horses weren't very comfortable to ride, but they were smart and knew how to handle cattle. We had cow horses, workhorses, and a big-footed black horse that belonged to Tom Johnston. This horse was Tom's sole possession. Jeff let Tom give the horse free room and board though he was a wild range horse and would never be good for anything. It gave Tom that "pride of possession."

As we sat around in the evenings, Tom liked to talk about his horse. He thought it might make a good workhorse, were it broken to the saddle and later the wagon. Well, shucks, I didn't know, maybe it would. It might be worth a try.

But how? The horse was so wild we didn't have anybody to ride it. But Tom had a plan. He was an old-timer, and he knew how the Indians "broke" their horses. He would use their method. He would put the horse in the corral and starve it until it got so weak that it could hardly stand up—much less pitch a rider off. Then maybe his boy or Jimmy could ride it.

Now that was the most unsporting thing I had ever heard of. Here we were "way out west in Texas" on a cattle ranch well staffed with cowboys, and nobody would ride this crazy horse. It was beginning to look as though a tenderfoot would have to preserve the good name of the Old West.

I told Tom that if he could somehow get this horse in the chute, saddle it, put a sack over its head, then lead it out into the middle of a section of land away from fences and other obstructions, I would ride it. He was afraid Jeff wouldn't like this as I might get hurt, but he finally agreed.

The following Sunday morning, after much ado, they got the cranky animal into the chute. It was bridled, saddled, and blindfolded. With its head tied tight against the saddle of the horse Tom was riding, we all proceeded to the middle of a section of land. The poor horse was scared to death, though I didn't have sense enough to be scared myself. Tom gave me a lecture on how to ride a pitching horse. He told me to put four joints of my backbone in the saddle, push (not pull) on the saddle horn, sink in my spurs, and pray.

With the horse blindfolded and tied to the horn of Tom's saddle, it couldn't do much but waltz around. I finally got in the saddle and promptly forgot Tom's instructions. I was to regret this.

I sat straight up in the saddle and dropped the reins to the ground. Tom saw the reins drop. He told me to pick them up and hold them tight with my left hand. Tom didn't seem to think this would be unsporting or unfair to the horse. He didn't seem to think the horse had anything to worry about —but, okay, if that was the way I wanted it.

It was.

And, "was I ready?"

"Yes."

Tom untied the horse's head. Since the sack was still over its eyes, it was afraid to move and just stood, trembling all over. Tom then took hold of the sack and looked at me.

I nodded.

Tom jerked the sack off. For just a split second nothing happened. Then, God Almighty! It was as though a jackhammer was pounding the seat of my pants. We were going up! And when we came down I knew what Tom had meant when he'd said, "Push, don't pull" on the horn of the saddle. I was looking almost straight down at the ground, since the horse's head was down between its front legs and its rear was straight up in the air. This was the animal I'd wanted to give a handicap to? Boy, oh boy!

At this stage I was no longer thinking about breaking the horse. I was thinking of survival. The next big leap put me in orbit. And soon I was sitting on the solid, numbing earth.

Tom took out after the horse and, in time, returned and suggested that we all return to the corral.

This I could not do with honor.

I had Tom replace the blindfold, and I remounted the monster. I had learned much in a few seconds. Now I put four joints of my backbone in the saddle and held the reins in my right hand and the ring on the saddle with my left. As Tom jerked the sack off, I sank my spurs in and started for the moon.

Any good cowhand will tell you that I was cheating like hell, but I was staying on top. This pitching continued and developed into an endurance contest, but eventually the horse tired first, and we returned to the corral in a gallop.

I rode this horse every day for two weeks, and every day it pitched. Finally I told Tom to take it, as it would never become domesticated. He turned it back to pasture.

LATER IN THE YEAR Mr. Bright decided to move to south Texas, below the "Cap Rock." I helped him load his furniture and belongings onto the truck. Everything except the chickens, that is.

After the loading was done, Mr. Bright, being honest, appreciative, and a little bit smart, placed his hand on my shoulder and proceeded to thank me for the help I had been to him—he only wished he could do something for me.

After a moment's hesitation, he slapped me affectionately with his open palm. "I've got it. Yes, sir, there is something I can do for you."

I stepped back and looked into his smiling face and sincere eyes. "What's that?"

Pointing his finger at me, he said, "I'll sell you the chickens."

"Hell, I don't want the chickens. You know I don't like killing things."

"You don't have to kill the chickens. Fact is, you don't have to do anything."

"How's that?"

"That's the beauty about chickens; they do all the work."

"They do?"

"Sure. They scratch and peck all over the place, and about three weeks from now they'll be so heavy and fat they won't hardly be able to walk."

"Then what?"

"You take them to Dimmitt and sell them, that's what."

"Sort of sounds like a good deal. But how do you know what they weigh now?" I wondered if I was being taken.

"We'll estimate the weight of an average chicken, count them all, then figure."

"You mean, I buy the chickens 'on the hoof?' "

"Sure. I figure the weight of the average chicken is . . . say about. . . . And now let's count them." He was pointing.

"Hey, don't miss those two ducklings behind the windbreak." I wanted to be fair and not cheat him.

"I'll tell you what I'll do." He was thinking real hard, rubbing his chin, and screwing up his mouth like a fellow will when solving a big problem.

"Well?"

"You give me $15.00 and take them all. I'll throw in that pet duck we call Gertrude." He hesitated. "The hens are still laying so you'll get eggs while they fatten for the market."

Hell, a fellow couldn't turn down a deal like that. So I made my first investment in livestock.

You know, things went just like Mr. Bright said they would —for three weeks that is. The chickens scratched, pecked, and laid some eggs. Then the GREAT DAY came. It was *harvest time*. The day you take your livestock to the market. . . .

Did you ever try to catch a chicken on the Plains of Texas?

AFTER MR. BRIGHT moved away, I took over the ranch for the winter. It was a one-man job, looking after the cattle and feeding them and riding the fences.

The ceremony that took place when Jeff turned the ranch over to me was simple but impressive. He dumped an armful of groceries on the kitchen table, handed me a cookbook, and wished me well.

I didn't want for anything. I had all the necessities of life and a book of instructions for putting them together. I would tackle it tomorrow and eat leftovers tonight.

However, later that day I had to milk. This was a gruesome, heartless job owing to the nature of the cows. These were Hereford beef cattle and hardly gave enough milk for their own calves, much less for human consumption. Now I had to go out and steal milk that rightfully belonged to a cute little calf. What had to be had to be, as I needed to make biscuits the next day.

I entered the corral with my bucket. The cow gave me a

Continued on page 62

SINKING OF THE BERTRAND, APRIL 1, 1865, BY HAROLD R. WILKIN. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

APRIL FOOL'S DAY in 1865 was no joke for the *Bertrand*. Two weeks out of St. Louis, headed upstream for Fort Benton, Montana Territory, the Missouri River steamboat struck a hidden snag and sank in DeSoto Bend, some twenty-five miles past Omaha. Her passengers and crew reached shore safely, but the craft and most of her rich cargo—the latter valued at between $100,000 and $300,000—went to the bottom. None could then know that the *Bertrand's* misfortune would bequeath to a later generation of Americans an archaeological treasure of outstanding scope and significance.

The dangerous business of steamboating on the Missouri River had received early impetus when, in 1820, the government's *Western Engineer*, supporting Maj. Stephen H. Long's Yellowstone Expedition, ascended as far as Council Bluffs, Iowa. The fur trade dominated steam commerce on the river in the years before the Civil War; in 1859 the American Fur Company's *Chippewa* pioneered her way close to the head of navigation at Fort Benton. Then, during the following decade, Missouri River boat traffic reached its zenith.

Although traffic never matched the commerce on the lower Mississippi or major eastern waterways, by the mid-1860s more than a dozen Missouri River steamboats were engaged in supplying the Montana mining settlements during the navigable months of the year. Challenging the river's swift and irregular currents, shifting channels, and treacherous snags, boats like the *Bertrand* floated hundreds of tons of tools, food, clothing, beverages, and other objects of necessity and desire to Fort Benton, whence wagons bore them overland to the mining camps. The *Bertrand*'s fateful voyage came as the gold boom neared its height. In the years after 1867 river traffic declined, a victim of the advancing railroad.

The life expectancy of steamboats pitted against the Missouri was short—around four years during the 1850s and 60s—but the *Bertrand* served even more briefly than most. She had been built in Wheeling, West Virginia, less than a year before her demise, and officially enrolled on November 25, 1864. Her tonnage was recorded at 251, her length 161 feet, and her beam 32 feet 9 inches. The trim stern-wheeler reflected forty-five years of design evolution aimed at achieving maximum cargo capacity with minimum weight and draft to enable navigation to the furthest limits of the western rivers. Her long, low, flat hull exemplified that of the classic "mountain" steamer that could draw as little as eighteen inches empty and about three times that fully laden. In a pinch, it was facetiously claimed, such craft could float on a heavy dew.

In late 1864 the *Bertrand* departed on her maiden voyage down the Ohio, then up the Mississippi to St. Louis, weighted with six thousand kegs of nails. By March of the following

Lost and Found: One Missouri Steamboat

by Barry Mackintosh

THE BERTRAND UNCOVERED, SUMMER OF 1969; COURTESY OF WOODMAN OF THE WORLD MAGAZINE

year she had entered the fleet of the Montana and Idaho Transportation Line, joining the steamboats *Benton, Deer Lodge, Fanny Ogden,* and *Yellowstone.* This firm, the largest and most active in Missouri River commerce during the Montana gold rush, was headed by St. Louis entrepreneurs John G. Copelin and John J. Roe. In addition to their steamboat interests, Roe and Copelin jointly or individually operated a wagon freight line and a wholesale-retail establishment in Virginia City, Montana. As consignees and transporters of goods by land and water, the pair handled a sizable portion of the northwestern frontier trade.

An advertisement in the February 22, 1865, *Tri-Weekly Missouri Democrat* heralded the departure of the "new, fast and light draught steamer BERTRAND" for Fort Benton: *Shippers and passengers seeking transportation to Fort Benton, Virginia City, Deer Lodge, and the Bitter Root Valley cannot fail to improve this opportunity. The steamer* Bertrand *is of light draught, with good carrying capacity and most excellent cabin accommodations, insuring to freighters and passengers that speed and safety so essential on a trip of this kind. Shippers may rely on this being one of the first boats to Benton. . . .*

Responding to the call, shippers loaded the *Bertrand* with cargo possibly exceeding her registered 251-ton capacity. The packet carried passengers in lesser proportion; between ten and twenty came aboard for her first trip up the Missouri. Among them were an Iowa attorney, W. Burroughs, and his daughter and grandchildren; Fannie and Annie, the young daughters of Major J. B. Campbell; Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Bixley with their servant; a Mrs. Atchison and children; Albert Rowe; and several other women. James A. Yore was captain. Like most riverboat masters, he probably had financial interest in his vessel.

The *Bertrand* appears to have left St. Louis on March 16, her departure coinciding with the seasonal rise of the Missouri. The voyage passed without recorded incident until the fatal encounter with the snag. One of the passengers provided an eyewitness account for the *Davenport* (Iowa) *Gazette* of April 13, 1865:

THE SINKING OF THE STEAMER BERTRAND—Our old friend W. Burroughs, Esq. returned Tuesday evening from the Missouri River, where he was wrecked on the steamer Bertrand, *on the first day of April, being bound for Montana by way of Fort Benton and having on board his daughter Mrs. Millard, and children, and several other lady passengers, some from the city. Mr. B. says the* Bertrand *was snagged about twenty-five miles above Omaha and sunk in five minutes carrying down a cargo of groceries valued at $300,000, and becomes a total loss. Most of the effects of the passengers were saved, and the cargo was generally fully insured. No*

The lower drawing on these pages shows that portion of the Bertrand *uncovered in 1969; the upper view is a reconstruction.*

blame was attached to the pilot, as the snag was entirely out of sight. The disaster took place in the day time, amid pleasant, warm weather. About one third of the cargo had been taken out in a damaged condition when Mr. B. left.

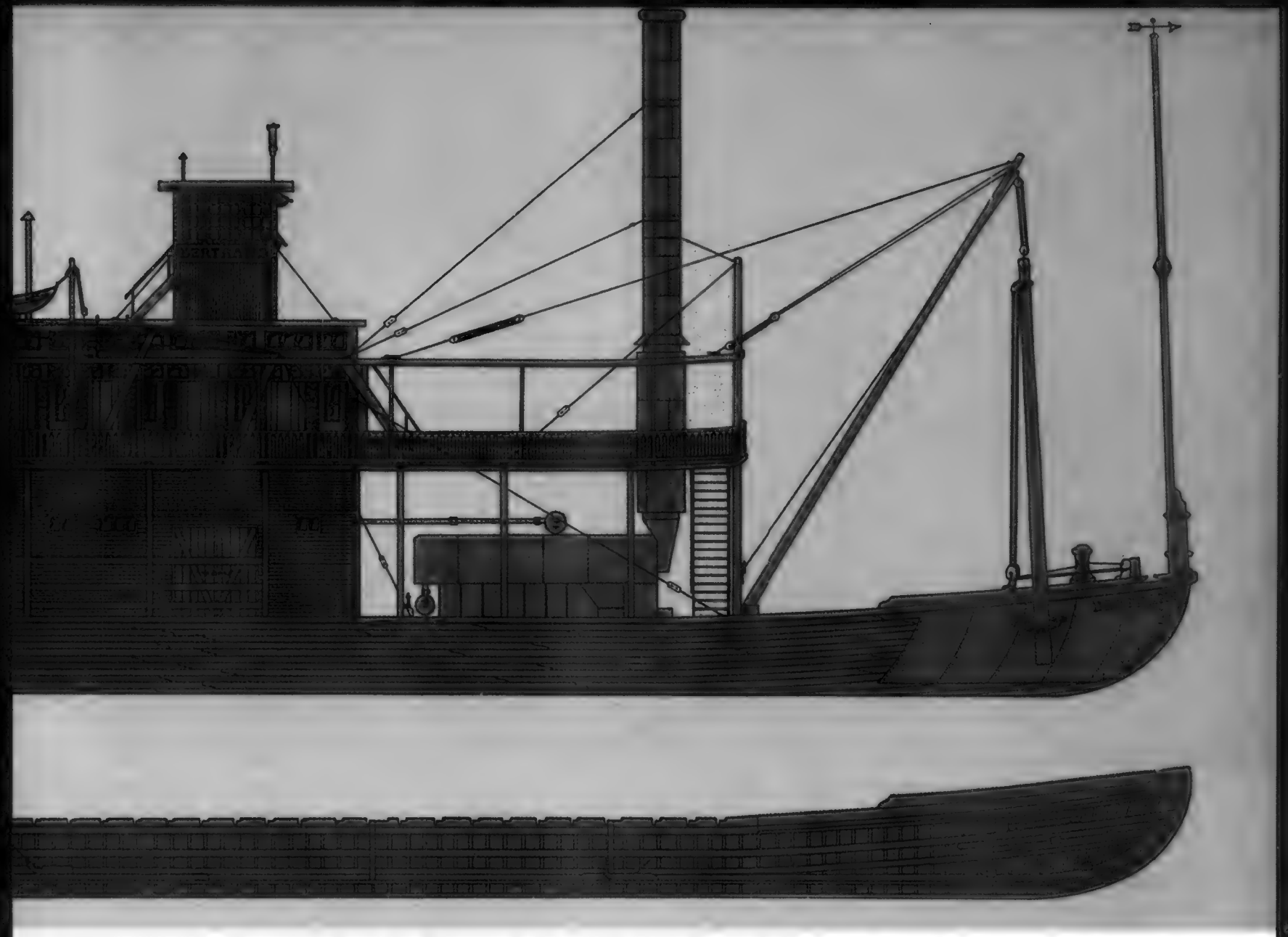
Salvage work proceeded expeditiously. While the passengers took refuge at DeSoto Landing, about three miles to the east, the crew made temporary shelters from salvaged pieces of the *Bertrand*'s superstructure. A few days later divers in the employ of the boat's insurers began recovery of the cargo. The main deck probably would have accommodated the one-third salvaged portion of which Burroughs spoke. The *Bertrand*'s greatest treasure was reportedly in the form of mercury to be used in the amalgam process of gold refining: some 35,000 pounds contained in wrought iron carboys may have been aboard. In addition to raising much of the cargo, the divers apparently salvaged most of the boat's machinery, including her paddle wheel, pistons, and other steam fittings.

The fate of the *Bertrand*, dramatic as it must have been for the men, women, and children who escaped, was hardly unusual for its time and place. A month later the *Cora II*, also en route to Fort Benton, was snagged and swamped only a few thousand yards upstream. In 1897, Capt. Hiram M. Chittenden of the Missouri River Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, compiled data listing the wrecks of 295 steamboats on the river to that date. Nearly two-thirds of these had been lost following collisions with snags.

The *Bertrand*, aided by local legend, was less quickly forgotten than most. Notwithstanding the early salvage activity, periodic rumor had it that the vessel still retained a treasure trove of quicksilver, whiskey, and even gold.

In 1896, F. M. McNeely of Norfolk, Nebraska, a brother of one of the divers who had recovered part of the cargo in 1865, led a search party to salvage the rest. By this time, as was its custom, the fickle Missouri had changed course. The channel where the *Bertrand* had sunk was now terra firma belonging to Jacob E. Markel of Omaha. An article in the *Omaha Weekly Bee* of July 22, 1896, related the initial efforts of the McNeely party to locate the boat with a magnetic dip needle and a borer. The party was evidently unsuccessful, for *Bertrand* seekers continued active in the area into the 1930s.

LINE DRAWINGS FROM U.S. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



Soon after the steamboat sank, swift currents and cargo recovery efforts resulted in the total loss of her superstructure.

THE HUNT WAS RESUMED in 1967 by a pair of would-be salvors from Omaha: Jesse Pursell and Sam Corbino. An 1866–67 Corps of Engineers map of the DeSoto Bend area showed them the approximate course of the river after the *Bertrand* went down. Having found the *Omaha Weekly Bee* article of 1896, they also knew the name of the owner of the land on which the boat was then thought to be buried. A courthouse search for a legal description of the property held by Jacob E. Markel turned up an 1890 deed defining several tracts that coincided with the earlier river channel. Ground and aerial surveys further narrowed the probable location of the sinking to a small portion of the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge within the shifted loop of DeSoto Bend.

Before starting their treasure hunt on the federal refuge land, Pursell and Corbino negotiated the required government contract specifying conditions of excavation, and disposition of any trove that might be discovered. The salvors would receive 60 percent of the value of any mercury, whiskey, and gold found; the United States would retain the balance and keep "any artifacts (to include all man-made objects or parts thereof) or other valuable historical items that may be recovered." Excavation would be supervised by the Midwest Archaeological Center of the National Park Service in Lincoln, Nebraska.

In early 1968 the salvors began to traverse the areas they had pinpointed, using a flux gate magnetometer, a sensitive electronic device showing magnetic anomalies produced by hidden ferrous materials. For several weeks the search was fruitless. Then, success!—readings clearly indicated a large concentration of buried metal. The presence of a boat and cargo became virtually certain when test borings unearthed fragments of wood, glass, leather, lead, tar paper, and brandied cherries.

Excavation commenced in March. Ten feet down, the salvors hit the water table, which lay about thirteen feet above the boat. The water and continually slumping banks of the excavation greatly complicated further progress. These problems were finally overcome by enlarging and grading the area of excavation and by installing a series of wells

BOTH PAGES, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Workmen open the Bertrand's *after hold during 1969 recovery operations. Although part of the cargo was removed soon after the steamboat sank, and an additional amount was ruined, modern salvors found some 300,000 artifacts.*

around the sunken hull. The system ultimately included 210 well points from which water was constantly pumped into DeSoto Bend, lowering the water table nearly to the vessel's bottom.

By November the crew had removed enough water, silt, and clay to expose the boat's stern decking and hatches. Now came the second great moment—the first recovery of cargo from the hold. Up came a quantity of boots, canned tomatoes, wine, black powder and primers, a plow, and several cases of Dr. J. Hostetter's Celebrated Stomach Bitters, an alcoholic patent medicine. Of particular value (though still not in monetary terms) was a soap box labeled "Bertrand Stores"—the first evidence corroborating the identity of the boat excavated. Later discoveries of a child's slate marked "Fannie" (presumably that of Fannie Campbell) among one lot of family effects and another lot bearing the name Atchison provided further confirmation. The dimensions and location of the wreck corresponded so closely to known data on the *Bertrand* there could be little doubt remaining that Pursell and Corbino had found their century-old quarry.

Weather and equipment problems forced suspension of salvage operations during the winter of 1968–69. Workers returned in the spring, and by the beginning of summer, 1969, the main decking was exposed. To permit later reconstruction, all boards, hatch framing, and supporting members were systematically numbered as they were removed. Now, with the holds accessible, unloading could begin in earnest.

The *Bertrand* yielded an immense volume of goods—some ten thousand cubic feet. But of the quicksilver and whiskey said to have been on board at the time of her sinking, there remained only nine carboys containing seventy-six pounds of mercury each, and two cases of "Whiskey Cock-tail"—far less than hoped for. Evidently the insurer's divers had done their work well insofar as these valuables were concerned. Nor was any of the fabled gold present. The treasure the salvors had bargained for failed to pay its own recovery costs.

AS A TIME CAPSULE contributing material details of life on the Northwest mining frontier, however, the *Bertrand* was a veritable gold mine. Even a summary of all the goods found would exceed the space available here. The cargo had been ordered in general categories—foodstuffs, liquor, and patent medicines; textiles, wearing apparel, and sewing supplies; household goods; mining supplies; hardware, tools, and building supplies; and miscellaneous. A sampling from each category gives some idea of the diversity present: brandy, oysters, pickles, soda crackers, and strawberries; blankets, shoes, tablecloths, and underwear; candlesticks, griddles,

An air view shows the Bertrand *after excavation and removal of her cargo. The hull was later reburied for protection against decay while awaiting funds and plans for permanent display, and the site is now covered by water.*

stoves, and washtubs; blasting powder and pickaxes; doorknobs, hacksaws, sash weights, and window frames; howitzer ammunition, ledgers, and tobacco.

Removal and preservation of the cargo posed difficult problems. Most of the *Bertrand*'s fragile burden was now embedded in clay, some of a highly tenacious quality. Certain crate markings and artifacts began to deteriorate almost as soon as they were exposed, necessitating immediate preservation treatment. Nearly half the bulk of the cargo was seriously crushed, and materials ill-suited to a prolonged underwater stay—like French mustard, meat and soap bars—had decayed or leached away. All that remained to identify many such items were their containers.

Yet much was intact. About seven hundred pairs of boots and shoes for men, women, and children were aboard, well preserved but for their linen stitching. Bottled pickles and lemon syrup, ironstone china, butter churns, shovels, lamps, and glasses were also among the survivors. The *Bertrand*'s immense shipment of Hostetter's Bitters—191 cases, twelve quarts to the case—came through approximately 80 percent intact. In all, some three hundred thousand items would qualify for restoration or stabilization for study or exhibit purposes.

The import of this unparalleled find to the historic preservationist, frontier historian, and archaeologist has only begun to be realized. Initially and of necessity, the excavated cargo made new demands on preservation technology, forcing an immediate expansion in the state of that science in order to deal with the problems posed by large quantities of wood, metals, leather, paper, glass, and other materials suddenly raised from a century of immersion in a freshwater environment. Stabilization and associated treatment of the *Bertrand* artifacts has continued ever since in laboratories at the De-Soto National Wildlife Refuge and the Midwest Archaeological Center. The preservation knowledge gained from this monumental undertaking will be of unusual value to conservators elsewhere.

From the historian's standpoint, the cargo offers rich insight into the physical amenities of existence on the nineteenth-century Montana mining frontier. Fine men's suits and women's shawls, brandied peaches, French olive oil, champagnes, imported sardines, and oysters aboard the *Bertrand* are tangible evidence of at least a veneer of luxury in the boom towns. Clearly life was not harsh for all.

Yet goods of all sorts were in short supply in the mining country, with prices commensurate. The *Bertrand*'s tonnage was about 13 percent of the total capacity of all vessels reaching Fort Benton in 1865. The loss of quantities of staple foods like flour and sugar, together with her shipment of basic clothing, tools, and other essential supplies, made sub-

A sampling of Bertrand *artifacts includes a wool shirt, carboy of mercury, child's shoes, knit shawl, and sodbreaking plow.*

sistence no easier for those in marginal circumstances who were forced to pay seventy cents per pound for sugar, ninety cents for flour, and thirty-five cents for a bar of soap in April of 1865.

Other components of the *Bertrand*'s cargo are concrete reminders that Montana was not given over entirely to gold fever in the mid-1860s. Plows, hay forks, cowbells, scythes, and other agricultural implements testify to the simultaneous existence of more settled pursuits. In addition to the miners and farmers, of course, were the merchants who profited from supplying their material needs. Shipping containers aboard the *Bertrand* bore the names of six consignees in Fort Benton, Virginia City, Deer Lodge, and Hell Gate, Montana Territory. Among them were Frank L. Worden and Granville Stuart, early territorial legislators and men of prominence in Montana's development.

The *Bertrand*'s multiplicity of artifacts will provide source material for monographs in historical archaeology for years to come. Ronald R. Switzer, who as museum specialist at the Midwest Archaeological Center supervised preservation of the cargo, has completed one detailed study published by the National Park Service: *The Bertrand Bottles: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Glass and Ceramic Containers* (1974). Other studies in progress will describe and classify the buttons, textiles, tableware, and tools from the wreck. These reports will be significant additions to the bibliography of references assisting archaeologists in the interpretation of historic sites.

WHAT OF THE BERTRAND herself? With the hull exposed, the effects of the previous salvage of the superstructure and machinery were plainly evident. The early salvors had weakened the boat structurally by removing important parts and had caused further damage by breaking into the holds. The intervening years had clearly taken their toll.

Yet the hull, encased so long in clay and silt, was essentially intact. Uncovered, it presented a unique opportunity for the study of western steamboat design and construction. No plans, historic photographs, or detailed descriptions of the *Bertrand* could be found, but her physical remains together with descriptive data available on comparable craft of the period permitted a graphic reconstruction. Conjecture became necessary where details of the superstructure were concerned, of course, and the accompanying profile drawing (pages 12-34) must be interpreted accordingly.

The greatest question remaining once the boat had yielded up her contents involved the fate of the hull. Careful analyses of its structural stability and the condition of its wood and metal components were made to assess the technical feasibil-

Other objects: a flint glass goblet, powder flask, claw hammer, and bottles (including Drake's Plantation Bitters, far right).

ity of its preservation for public exhibit. The verdict of the participating scientists and specialists was positive. The hull could be raised, preferably by flotation, to be preserved and displayed in a controlled-atmosphere enclosure. As an alternative, it could be exhibited in place with a dry underground structure built around it. Or it could be preserved in a controlled water environment, to be viewed from adjacent underground rooms or overhead.

Unfortunately, any of the adequate display alternatives would involve costs in the millions of dollars. The modest budget of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which holds jurisdiction over the *Bertrand*, must understandably give priority to fish and wildlife. Under the circumstances those who missed seeing the boat at the time of her final unloading in 1969 may not soon have another chance. With the salvage mission complete and all data recorded, the hull was backfilled with silt and covered with a plastic sheet. The pumping system was then removed, and the water table sought its former level.

Today the *Bertrand* remains under twelve feet of silt, sand, and water. She is safe: she has survived in a like environment for over a century, and if need be she might make it through another. But for the sake of our western heritage, let us hope that her second reappearance comes sooner and lasts longer than her first.

FOR FURTHER READING

Jerome E. Petsche's *The Steamboat Bertrand: History, Excavation, and Architecture* (1974) is the indispensable guide to its subject. In addition to treating the specifics of the *Bertrand* and her cargo, it presents useful background material on Missouri steamboating and steamboat construction. *The Bertrand Bottles: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Glass and Ceramic Containers* by Ronald R. Switzer (1974) is the second book stemming from the great discovery and the first to focus in depth on one category of artifacts.

Several good books deal with the broader topic represented by the *Bertrand*. Hiram M. Chittenden's 1903 *History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River; Life and Adventures of Joseph La Barge* (reprinted 1962) is a colorful, anecdotal blend of history with the biography of a steamboat captain. Among the more recent general works are *River Boats of America* by Frank Donovan (1966), *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* by Louis C. Hunter (1949), and *A History of Steamboating on the Upper Missouri* by William E. Lass (1962).

Barry Mackintosh *is a historian in the Washington, D.C., office of the National Park Service. His article is largely based on material in* The Steamboat Bertrand: History, Excavation, and Architecture *by Jerome E. Petsche, supervisory archaeologist on the Bertrand project, and was prepared with Mr. Petsche's cooperation and assistance. Petsche's comprehensive book (177 pp., illus., maps, diagrams, appen., biblio., index, $2.65, paper) is available by mail from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.*

Grand Old Man of the Colorado

by Barbara Bigham

BERT LOPER: Pioneer, Soldier, Prospector, and River Guide." That's what a monument at Green River, Utah, says about this adventurous riverman who rode the Colorado so often that he knew it as well as most city folk know Main Street. It wasn't surprising that Loper decided to celebrate his eightieth birthday in July, 1949, by "running the river" one more time. And it is somehow fitting that on that trip the river chose to carry him to a resting place deep within the immense crevices of the Grand Canyon. "The days, weeks, months, and years that I have put in on that river and in these canyons seem to have made me part of the whole grand setup," he had once said. Finally, after a lifetime of river running, he was truly a part of the river.

Bert Loper was born the same year that John Wesley Powell made the first trip down the Colorado River—1869—and on the same day that the famous explorer began his run down the San Juan Canyon—July 31. When young Loper came west from his hometown of Bowling Green, Missouri, however, it wasn't the river that lured him—it was the tales of silver and promises of wealth. For Loper those promises proved false.

"My living was in the silver mines of Colorado," he recalled in later years. "When they shut down I went out in search of gold, ending up by placer mining along the San Juan River. For eight years I lived the life of a hermit on the San Juan. That's where I learned to boat. I was on the river constantly, fighting it, learning to love its sandy waters and temperamental nature."

It's impossible to tell exactly when Loper stopped fighting the river and began to love it, but by 1893 he was clearly hooked on river running. That year he made his first trip down the San Juan from the Colorado line to Bluff City, Utah; over the next few years his trips lengthened to cover major portions of the Colorado River itself.

Loper tried to concentrate on his mining efforts, but it soon became apparent that reports of gold on the river were greatly exaggerated. One by one, miners left the region in search of better fields. But Loper didn't leave. He had found neither silver or gold, but he had the river. In 1907 he joined Charles S. Russell and E. R. Monett on a voyage down the Colorado, bound for the Grand Canyon. They planned to photograph the canyonlands and do a bit of prospecting as well. It was on this trip that Loper first rode Cataract Canyon, a forty-mile stretch containing some of the roughest water in the West. With sixty rapids to churn its water, it rightfully earned the nickname "graveyard of the Colorado."

Loper had trouble running Cataract, but he was in good company. It was Major Powell who gave it its name after spending twelve days bringing his party through it. Loper managed to maneuver through the treacherous waters with only slight damage to his boat. He stopped at Hite, Utah, to repair both the boat and his camera, which had become so damp with spray that the lens rusted tight. His companions continued on to Lees Ferry, Arizona, where Loper was to rejoin them for the trip through the Grand Canyon.

Repairs took longer than anticipated, and by the time he finally reached Lees Ferry, they had departed without him. Loper returned alone to Red Canyon, near Hite, pulling and rowing his boat 162 miles upstream. It was there that he built a cabin which became his headquarters and starting point for many subsequent trips.

Loper was still determined to shoot the Grand Canyon, and after Charles Russell returned, the two made plans for another voyage. The two men were, as Loper put it, "closest pals," but the trip they finally embarked on, in 1914, was to be far from the glorious adventure they had hoped for. While preparing for the expedition, Loper realized that there was something wrong with Russell. "After leaving Green River my companion became more surly," Loper recalled. "He was in the boat behind me. Every now and then I could hear him talking to himself."

Loper listened carefully to his friend's rambling, and although he couldn't make out everything Russell said, it soon became apparent that Russell was fighting with an imaginary Bert Loper. This odd behavior continued, and while camping overnight, Loper was awakened by the loud, angry voice. "Russell was sitting up in bed going at it again, and when one takes into consideration that we were 120 miles from a human being, it was just a little creepy. But the worst was yet to come," Loper said.

By the time the men reached Cataract Canyon, Loper knew they were in serious trouble. The boats Russell had chosen for the trip were steel pleasure boats only twelve inches deep, and from the first, Loper had predicted failure. Once they reached rough water Loper knew the boats would be swamped. "The big drop in Cataract Canyon . . . was

Continued on page 63

Still fit at the age of seventy-seven, veteran river guide Bert Loper stands in front of his Red Canyon, Utah, cabin just before embarking on a 1947 expedition down the Colorado.

UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Architecture of Zion

Interesting today as folk architecture, surviving examples of early Mormon houses embody the same virtues of solidity, simplicity, and practicality that characterized the Saints themselves

Text and photography by Jan Harold Brunvand

TRAVELERS IN THE MORMON REGIONS of the West are likely to note with interest the presence of two types of nineteenth-century structures — log cabins and stone or brick houses—in nearly every town settled by the Saints. A restored log cabin is often a prominent feature of the town square or public park, a reminder of the community's pioneer heritage; surviving brick or stone buildings are more numerous and frequently are still occupied by direct descendants of the settlers who built them. This development from rustic cabin to substantial masonry construction (sometimes with an intermediary state of adobe) typifies the housing of early Mormon migrants, and its visible heritage, combined with other features characteristic of Mormon towns, continues to set them apart from "Gentile" settlements.

The distinctive landscape of the Mormon West is largely a result of the Saints transporting Joseph Smith's 1833 plan for a "City of Zion" into the Great Basin and mountain West, where Brigham Young led his people in 1847. The imprint of the founding prophet's master plan on a land he never saw is obvious in such features as towns with wide streets aligned with the cardinal points of the compass, church and civic buildings placed at the center of this gridwork, unpainted barns and granaries located within the community perimeter with a surrounding landscape of open fields, and even in the prevailing house types, which Joseph

A burned-out shell but still full of dignity, this ruin of a nineteenth-century Mormon central-hall house stands near Brigham City on the western slope of the Wellsville Mountains, a northern Utah region where many fine examples of stone house construction may still be found.

Smith had specified should be of stone or brick construction. So firmly entrenched did this last practice become that, according to one geographer's research, "farm towns west of the Great Plains with more than half of their houses built of brick are almost certain to be Mormon."

Other common visual aspects of the Mormon West were influenced by the terrain and the Saints' adaptations to it. These features included elaborate networks of roadside irrigation ditches (running even through towns), hay derricks, windrows of Lombardy poplars, and the thrifty if inelegant "Mormon fence," an unpainted conglomeration of odd-sized boards.

The first homes built by the Mormon pioneers were usually crude log cabins, as described in a verse from a folk song:

Oh, of logs we've built our houses,
Of dirt we have our floors,
Of sods we've built our chimneys
And shakes we have for doors.

The technology and design of these houses was typical of the American log cabin tradition, with a one-room floor plan; shaped logs notched in "V," dovetail, or half-dovetail forms; and gable-end chimneys. About the only distinctive "Utah" touch was the placement of a window directly adjoining the front door, put there, perhaps, to speed construction.

In the central and southern part of the state, additions to or substitutes for log cabins were made with adobe brick, which had also been employed from the beginning in this region for the construction of forts. Adobe homes usually were plastered over and adorned with some bric-a-brac to disguise their plain construction. Their facades were symmetrical, and enlargements by means of rear lean-tos recreated the "saltbox" silhouette remembered from New England to the Midwest.

As Mormon settlements spread along the Wasatch Front and beyond during the 1850s, the basic house patterns were repeated. With the advent of stone quarries and brick kilns in the 1860s, however, Mormon builders put more substantive materials to use in the construction of their homes as well as for chapels, tabernacles, and temples.

The preferred house type, already passé in the East where it had developed under the influence of Georgian architecture, was a central-hall brick or stone structure with two chimneys and a symmetrical facade. This "Nauvoo-style" house (as it was called by the Mormon settlers) appropriately embodied the virtues of solidity, simplicity, and practicality that well characterized the Saints themselves. In folk-architectural terms the house was built either as an "I" house (one room deep and two stories high) or a "Four-over-Four" house (two rooms deep). Mormon builders often enhanced the structure's symmetry by adding an outside door on the second story directly above the front entrance, often leading only to a tiny balcony or even opening into empty space.

In accordance with frugal Mormon philosophy, house decoration was usually restricted to restrained cornice moldings, return cornices on gables, a bit of shaping of windows and lintels, or to varied textures and colors in the building materials. This last effect was made possible through variations in the native Utah stone, which included red sandstone from the south, cream or pink limestone and black volcanic rock from the central counties, and harder varicolored stone from the north.

Whatever the materials and whatever the decor of the houses (in some towns decoration flourished), most Mormons stuck to the central-hall plan, creating larger homes to fit their growing families by duplicating the rectangular units in "T" and "L" configurations or by adding lean-tos. While often built by professional stone or brick masons recruited abroad by missionaries, these houses reflect the conservative cultural values of the Mormon faithful and to this degree at least are authentic folk architecture.

The period of polygamy, announced in 1852 and abandoned by the organized church in 1890, coincided with that of the developing housing traditions and had an undeniable effect on home design, although probably not as great as folklore suggests. There never was "a chimney for every wife," and all the mirror-image houses in Utah did not serve polygamous families.

For men who did have multiple wives, however, "Mormon" houses lent themselves very well to the desire to provide "equal comforts" for each unit of the family. Symmetrical house plans expanded by repeating the basic module served this purpose admirably, although some men preferred to build separate houses for each wife and her children. Another important need of the polygamist—to keep out of lawmen's hands—was satisfied by adding extra doorways to the house or a "polygamy pit" underneath where he could hide until the threat was gone.

The photographic portfolio of traditional Mormon architecture on the next several pages features homes built in Utah, but the same settlement patterns and house types may be found in almost any Mormon small town of the West, from Oakley, Idaho, to Snowflake, Arizona.

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This log cabin in the ghost town of Grafton, near Zion National Park, embodies traditional half-dovetail corner notching and gable-end chimney; the chimney, however, is a papier-mâché fake added for use in the movie "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." The window directly adjoining the front door is a distinctive element of Utah cabins, including one preserved in Temple Square, Salt Lake City.

This house in Spring City, Utah, illustrates the transition from log to adobe construction. The left half was originally a square log cabin with V-notched logs; the right-hand half, probably added later along with the porch, was built from adobe bricks. In front of the house is a typical "Mormon fence" put together with unpainted, uneven, vertical boards.

The Jesse N. Smith house in Parowan, dating from 1856–57, is a simple example of a two-story, central-hall, "saltbox" plan rendered in adobe brick with a stucco coating. As is common in traditional Mormon dwellings, the facade is symmetrical in design with minimal decoration. The gables have been embellished with Greek Revival return cornices.

Later adobe houses in Utah sometimes became quite grand. The Carl Shirts home of 1889 in Escalante—said to be the first one built there of anything besides logs—was plastered over and given false quoins (blocks forming the corners), then trimmed with elaborate woodwork. Underneath it all is a standard central-hall floor plan with a rear frame addition.

The William Stirling house in Leeds, built in about 1876, is the most famous example of a home built with "Dixie dormers"—an effect achieved by carrying the cornice up and around the dormer windows and eaves in a continuous line. Only about eight or nine houses with Dixie dormers remain in southern Utah; all are located in the region around St. George.

David Riley Stevens, the first bishop of the Latter-day Saints ward in Holden, Utah, built his two-story red brick home there in 1872. A lovely example of the standard "Nauvoo" or central-hall plan, it is decorated conservatively with white trim, some gingerbread, and two beehive-shaped attic ventilators.

The Watkins-Coleman home in Midway was built in 1869 of adobe brick with sandstone quoins, and painted dark red with white trim. The lacy bargeboard design, also found on several other homes in the town, was developed by a local craftsman named Moroni Blood. The symmetrical plan, well-suited for the two wives of the builder, was derived from a published design.

The Canute Peterson home in Ephraim, Utah, was built in 1869 with sun-dried yellow brick, and its design includes some fine cornice molding. The placement of the chimneys is unusual, but of even greater interest is the "polygamy pit" under the main floor—a refuge for the man of the house when evading federal marshals.

This small house of coursed rubble with solid quoins is in Toquerville, one of the oldest Mormon settlements in southern Utah. The upstairs door leading nowhere is a typical Utah puzzle. (Some people suggest such curiosities were intended to facilitate the moving of furniture or as places to shake out bedding.)

The Omer Call house in Willard, built in 1861, is located in a northern Utah region of stone houses in quality and number unmatched elsewhere in the state. The most prominent builder was the Welsh-Mormon immigrant stonemason Shadrach Jones, who built this home, his own larger one in Willard, and others throughout northern Utah. The basic design of this central-hall house is pure Utah, but the trim is faintly "alpine."

This attractive but unoccupied house in Fountain Green, Utah, dates from 1877 and is of the standard central-hall, "four-over-four" plan. Interesting touches include small pointed gables over rounded upstairs windows and the familiar second-floor-center door without porch, balcony, or explanation.

And here is solid Mormon home building epitomized! This neat, substantial, conservative central-hall house in Manti, Utah, has only return cornices for trim and is built of the same local limestone as the Mormon temple in the background. Like Manti itself—a town built on the traditional Mormon plan—such construction is a reflection of a well-ordered culture which placed high values on the virtues of simplicity, economy, and practicality.

Notes from the Custer Battlefield: Walter Mason Camp's Interviews with Survivors of the Little Bighorn

GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER IN 1865: CENTURY MAGAZINE, 1892

Edited by Kenneth Hammer

No event in the Indian Wars has been the subject of more interest, controversy, or verbiage than the series of engagements that took place in a broad Montana valley on June 25, 1876, wherein more than two hundred troopers of the U.S. 7th Cavalry under one Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer were wiped out. Because those who could best tell the story of what happened there (and why) died on Custer Ridge, the Battle of the Little Bighorn has been fair game for speculation and debate ever since.

One of the foremost students of this battle, as well as of the Indian Wars in general, was Walter Mason Camp (1867–1925), a civil engineer and railroad magazine editor. During a two-decade quest to separate the facts of Custer's Last Stand from the myth, Camp visited the battle site at least nine times and personally interviewed more than sixty surviving members of the 7th Cavalry and more than 150 Indian participants. Camp's vast trove of field notes lay in private hands for over half a century and thus has remained one of the least-known primary sources of information on the subject. This material is now part of the collections of the Lilly Library at Indiana University, the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, and the Denver Public Library.

This month, in commemoration of the forthcoming one-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Brigham Young University Press is releasing a major selection of Camp's field notes on the battle. The publication of Custer in '76, *and of the excerpts on these pages, marks the first time a significant portion of this important literature on Custer's last battle has appeared in print.*

At right we reproduce a brief review of the events of that fateful June day, written by Walter Camp for a book he did not live to complete. Camp's preface is followed by a montage of excerpts from interviews he conducted with survivors of the battle. (The text has been slightly edited for clarity.) Camp's commentary on the substance of his interviews appears in roman type; actual quotations from those he interviewed or corresponded with appear in italic type.

ON THE AFTERNOON of June 25, 1876, the 7th U.S. Cavalry, commanded by Lt. Col. George A. Custer, was following the trail of a large body of Indians westward into the valley of the Little Bighorn River in the . . . territory of Montana. Without certain knowledge of the location of the Indian camps, the regiment, numbering 617 officers and men, with about 53 Indian and civilian scouts and packers additional, had been divided into four parts, or battalions, about noon of that day. Two of these battalions . . . were in the advance and were marching close together, up to a point within five miles of the village. Here informal and hasty reports from some of the scouts, and incorrect deductions by Custer from his own observations, led to the wrong conclusion that the Indians were fleeing before them. Without any attempt at investigation Custer hurried forward the battalion of Maj. [Marcus A.] Reno . . . to overtake the Indians and bring them to battle, with assurance that he (Reno) would be supported. Reno did exactly as he was ordered, by proceeding some 4½ miles and bringing the Indians to battle, in the valley, supposing all the while that Custer would be at his back to support. In this Custer failed to keep his agreement and Reno at once found more Indians than he could handle, and, after fighting for twenty minutes or less, fell back, without attempting to cover his retreat, thereby suffering heavy loss [about 32 men killed].

We will now go back to Custer. Instead of keeping within supporting distance of Reno he had changed his mind and marched his battalion . . . on a divergent route. After proceeding three miles he suddenly came into view of the valley and saw the village, all standing and no Indians running away. Here, for the first time, he became aware of his mistaken impressions of the situation.

The text for this article is adapted from material in Custer in '76, Walter Camp's Notes on the Custer Fight, *edited by Kenneth Hammer and being released this month by Brigham Young University Press. © 1976 by Brigham Young University Press.*

At this point the two battalions were more than one mile apart within full view of each other but with nearly impassable ground and a river between them. Reno was in the valley and Custer on high bluffs to the eastward and, as yet, neither had engaged the Indians. Custer continued three miles farther, with a view to attack the village on the flank, and had passed out of sight of Reno's division before Reno's battle began. Custer may have heard, but he never saw, Reno's fight or any part of it.

Custer proceeded within menacing distance of the large village on the opposite side of the stream and about 1½ miles farther down the valley than Reno's advance but did not attack it, at least he did not attack with determination. The Indians swarmed out to meet him, and between fifteen and thirty minutes after Reno had retreated, the battalion of Custer became engaged, fell back from the river and still farther down the valley, to a high ridge. The Indians who had gone out to meet Reno had now returned and joined in the fight against Custer. On this ridge all of Custer's battalion [about 225 men] were surrounded and killed with the exception of one Crow scout, who escaped from the ridge early in the battle. This fight, from the time it started down near the river, lasted between one and two hours.

About the time Custer's fight began, or a little before, the third division of the regiment . . . commanded by [Capt. Frederick W.] Benteen, joined Reno at a point on the bluffs east of the river, to which Reno had retreated. Here both battalions, entirely ignorant of Custer's plans or movements but hearing his firing, remained two hours, undecided what to do. Meantime these two battalions were joined by the fourth, comprising the pack train and its escort. . . . As no one in particular was exercising command, one captain, out of impatience, had advanced a mile or more with his troop in the direction of Custer, going within full view of about half of Custer's battlefield 2 or 2½ miles distant in an air line. Custer's resistance had now ended and the officers of this troop saw, through their glasses but without understanding at the time what they saw, the Indians killing Custer's wounded. In about a half hour three more troops joined this one in advance, but were soon attacked by the victorious Indians leaving the scene of the Custer fight and fell back 1½ miles to favorable ground where a stand was made. Here the Indians attacked savagely and in great force. The fighting lasted the remainder of the day and all the next, with further losses, in addition to those of Reno's first fight and that of Custer, of about 27 men killed and 45 wounded. On the evening of the second day the Indians took down their village and left the valley, in advance of the approach of a column of cavalry and infantry under generals [Alfred H.] Terry and [John] Gibbon, and during the forenoon of the third day the remnant of the 7th Cavalry was relieved by this force.

Such, very briefly, are the general facts concerning the eventful battle of the Little Bighorn. It was no massacre; there was no ambush, no trap set for the white troops to enter. It was a battle in three fights, fair and simple. The Indians had met Custer's detachments in detail and defeated them, all within sight of their village.

The haphazard plan, or absence of plan, of this battle, with the commanding officer killed, was the source of many misunderstandings over the responsibility for the general result, and in the years that have passed the battle has been fought over many times in print. . . .

Charles A. Varnum, Second Lieutenant, Company A, 7th Cavalry

(Portion of a letter written by Varnum to Walter Camp, April 14, 1909.)

With my scouts I acted as advance guard up the Rosebud and my instructions were, particularly, not to let any trail get away from us without letting Custer know of it. On June 24th . . . [we] went into camp about dark. Soon after camping Custer came over to the Scout camp and had a long talk with the Crows. . . . After a while he called me in and told me that the Crows reported that between us and the Little Big Horn was a high hill with a sort of Crow nest in the top where the Crows watched the Sioux when they were on that river and the Crows were on a horse stealing trip. That their camp could be made out in the clear light of the morning when the daylight broke. The Indian trail we were following led in that direction and the Crows believed their camp was on the Little Big Horn. Custer said that the Crows were going on at once and he wanted an intelligent white man to go with them and take some Rees for messengers & Boyer [Mitch Bouyer, a civilian guide] as interpreter and send him back word what we discovered. . . . He told me to . . . start about 9 o'clock and he would move with the command at eleven and in the morning he would be bivouaced under the base of the hill I was on and he would expect to get word from me there.

I left as directed taking Boyer, Charlie Reynolds, five Crows . . . and eight or ten Rees. The Crows were our guides. Except that we stopped two or three times in the dense undergrowth along a stream to let the Crows smoke cigarettes we were on the go till about 2.30 or 3 a.m. on the 25th, and as day light broke I found myself in a peculiar hollow like old Crow nest at West Point, near the summit of a high ridge in the divide between the Rosebud and Little Big Horn. This latter stream was in plain sight about ten miles off. A timbered tributary led down to the Rosebud and up which we had evidently come during the night. Another led down to the Little Big Horn. On this were [two lodges] which I understand were filled with dead bodies of Indians, probably from Crooks fight of the 17th.

The top of the hill was covered with short grass and very steep, but I crawled up & watched the valley till the sun rose. All I could see was the two lodges. The Crows tried to make me see smoke from villages behind the bluffs on the Little Big Horn & gave me a cheap spy glass but I could see nothing.

As much an attraction to the artist as to the historian, the Custer battle has inspired some 900 paintings. Though Frederic Remington's "Last Stand" (above) is allegorical in nature, it was apparently based on the event.

They said there was an immense pony herd out grazing & told me to look for worms crawling on the grass & I could make out the herd; but I could not see worms or ponies either. My eyes were somewhat inflamed from loss of sleep & hard riding in dust & hot sun & were not in the best of condition, but I had excellent eyesight & tried hard to see but failed. About 5 o'clock I sent the Rees back with a note to Custer telling him what the Crows reported, viz a tremendous village on the Little Big Horn. I do not remember the wording of my note but I was told when the command arrived that Custer got it.

After sending off the Rees we saw one Indian riding a pony & leading another at the end of a long lariat & some distance behind, an Indian boy on a pony. They were evidently hunting stray stock and were perhaps a mile off toward the Little Big Horn and were riding parallel to the ridge we were on. There was a gap in the range to our right and the Crows thought they would cross there & soon discover Custer. By this time smoke could be seen in a ravine towards the Rosebud showing where Custer was. The Crows were mad that he lighted fires. Boyer said that White Swan, who seemed to be a sort of leader, wanted us to try & cut him off & kill them where they crossed the range so they would not discover the troops. Boyer, Reynolds & two Crows with myself started off dismounted to do so. After, perhaps, a half mile of hard work through very broken country, where we could see nothing I heard a call like a crow cawing from the hill and we halted. Our two Crows repeated the immitation but you could easily see they were talking or signaling and we started back. I asked Boyer what was the matter but he did not know. On our return we learned that the Sioux had changed their course away from the pass but soon after our return they changed again and crossed the ridge. We could see them as they went down the trail towards the command and could then see a long trail of dust showing Custer was moving but we could not see the column. Before it came into sight the

PAINTED 1890; WOOLAROC MUSEUM, BARTLESVILLE, OKLAHOMA

Sioux stopped suddenly, got together & then as suddenly disappeared, one to the right & one to the left, so we knew the Sioux had discovered our approach.

About this time six or seven Sioux came up unto ridge we were on about two miles, perhaps, from where we were and beyond the gap spoken of before. They rode in single file along the crest of a ridge forming a divide of the stream running into the Rosebud and in the direction of that stream. That they would soon discover Custer's command we knew and watched them accordingly. The crest where we were was higher than they were and as they rode along the crest, reflected against the sky their ponies looked as big as elephants. They rode leisurely but soon, all of a sudden, they disappeared and soon afterward one black spot took their place. They had evidently ran off to alarm their camp, leaving one man to watch the column.

The command came in vision about this time and we watched it approach the gap where it halted. I rode down towards the column & soon met the Genl. He said, "Well you've had a night of it." I said yes, but I was still able to sit up & notice things. Tom Custer & Calhoun then came up to us & Custer was angry at their leaving the column & ordered them back. I told the Genl. all I had seen, as we rode back towards the Crow nest hill and we climbed the hill together. Custer listened to Boyer while he gazed long & hard at the valley. He then said "Well I've got about as good eyes as anybody & I can't see any village, Indians, or anything else," or words to that effect. Boyer said, "Well General, if you don't find more Indians in that valley than you ever saw together you can hang me." Custer sprang to his feet saying, "It would do a damned sight of good to hang you, wouldn't it" & he & I went down the hill together. I recall his remark particularly because the word damn, was the nearest to swearing I ever heard him come, and I never heard him use that once before and that was in an Indian fight on the Yellowstone August 4, 1873. . . .

Standing Bear, Indian Warrior

(Portion of notes from an interview conducted at Manderson, South Dakota, on July 12, 1910.)

[Standing Bear] says Black Bear and several others early in morning of June 25 were up on divide going off on a visit, and as they proceeded they crossed the trail of the Sioux leading into valley of Little Bighorn. This trail was then several days old and there was something about it that attracted their attention, and upon closer inspection, they discovered a fresh trail of shod horse tracks on the older trail. Having fought soldiers (Crook) only a few days before, their suspicions were at once aroused, and one of them proposed that they ride back to the top of the divide and take a look around, which they quickly did. From this point they could see the smoke of Custer's camp to their left, and away off to their right, high up among some trees, a small party of men, apparently scouts (Varnum's party). From this I take it that

> *"Custer . . . gazed long & hard at the valley. He then said 'Well I've got about as good eyes as anybody & I can't see any village, Indians, or anything else.'"*
>
> *2nd Lt. Charles A. Varnum*

the shod horse tracks on the old trail which they discovered was the trail of Varnum in advance of Custer. They then retraced their steps to high ground, and here it was that Varnum saw them.

Says that Custer's dust was seen approaching the village over low ground to the east, down a kind of dry coulee. As soon as the soldiers came in sight they halted and apparently were preparing for a charge. All this time the Ogalallas were getting ready. Finally the soldiers advanced very near to the river [Little Bighorn], but before they could cross were engaged by the Indians and forced back to the ridge where the main fight took place.

As soon as Custer came in sight and halted, some of the Indians crossed over, but he advanced against this resistance nearly to the river before it became strong enough to check him.

John Martin (Giovanni Martini), Trumpeter, Company H, 7th Cavalry

(Portion of notes from an interview conducted on October 24, 1908.)

Trumpeter Martin, Orderly for Custer on June 25, 1876. . . . Martin says at mouth of Rosebud Mitch Bouyer told [Brig. Gen. Alfred H.] Terry where Sitting Bull's camp was located. Then officers desired Bouyer to conduct them to the village, and Bouyer said he had previously been with Sitting Bull and that Bull had offered one hundred ponies for his head and that he would go along, and the Indians would kill him if they could get him; and Custer said in that case the whole command would meet the same fate.

Did not see Indians on ridge . . . when Custer separated from Reno. Says that before Custer reached high ridge he marched in columns of twos with gray horses in center of column. . . . Martin says Custer's trail passed along where Reno [later] retreated to. Then Custer halted command on the high ridge about ten minutes, and officers looked at village through glasses. Saw children and dogs playing among the tepees but no warriors or horses except few loose ponies grazing around. There was then a discussion among the officers as to where the warriors might be and someone sug-

John Elder's monumental canvas "Battle of the Little Big Horn" is among the more stirring renderings of the Custer fight. Like most others, however, its accuracy is not complete: Custer did not carry a saber on this campaign.

gested that they might be buffalo hunting, recalling that they had seen skinned buffalo along the trail on June 24.

Custer now made a speech to his men saying, "We will go down and make a crossing and capture the village." The whole command then pulled off their hats and cheered. And the consensus of opinion seemed to be among the officers that if this could be done the Indians would have to surrender when they would return, in order not to fire upon their women and children.

Then command "Attention" "Fours right" "Column right" "March" was given and command went forward down off the hill and then "Column left" and whole command passed down ravine toward dry creek. Martin thinks he continued about one-half mile farther when Cooke [Custer's adjutant] halted and wrote message to Benteen and gave to Martin and then Custer spoke to Martin and said: "Trumpeter, go back on our trail and see if you can discover Benteen and give him this message. If you see no danger come back to us, but if you find Indians in your way stay with Benteen and return with him and when you get back to us report." Martin started back on trail before got up hill (that is up to high point where whole command had halted) he heard heavy firing in the direction of his right. It might also have been Reno's fire which he heard as that would have been to his right. He afterward supposed was at Ford B [location of Custer's force, near mouth of Medicine Tail Creek]. . . . When Martin got to the top of the ridge he looked down in the village and saw Indians charging like a swarm of bees toward the ford, waving buffalo hides. At the same time he saw Custer retreating up the open country in the direction of the battlefield. . . .

Curley, Crow Scout

(Portion of notes from an interview conducted on the Custer battlefield in 1908.)

On September 18, 1908, the Crow Curley, scout with Custer on [June] 25, 1876, accompanied me on a visit to the vicinity of the burning tepee and from there back over Custer's route to the battlefield. On this day [in 1876] he, with three other Crows (Hairy Moccasin, Goes Ahead, and White Man Runs Him) were with Mitch Bouyer. . . . At this time Curley was twenty years old.

He directed me to the site of the big Sioux camp, all of which, with the exception of the lone tepee covering a dead warrior, had been moved in advance of Custer's arrival.

PAINTED 1885; AMON CARTER MUSEUM, FORT WORTH, AND STATE OF NEW YORK DIVISION OF MILITARY AND NAVAL AFFAIRS

This was located on the north side of Benteen Creek, about four miles from the Little Bighorn, on a wide and smooth piece of ground gently sloping toward the creek. . . . His means of identifying the locality was a high rocky bluff, from which he, with Mitch Bouyer and three other Crow scouts, had been watching the Sioux with field glasses all that forenoon before the arrival of Custer's command. Curley said the tepee stood just opposite the bluff, and as the troops came along, the tepee was set on fire by the soldiers.

From this point he went with Custer's battalion as it came along, and when Custer diverged from Reno's trail, about 1¼ miles from the river, Bouyer and his four Crows went with Custer. Custer's route from this point was directly across the country, on the crest of a long ridge, running to the bluffs and coming out at a point about five hundred feet north of the Reno corral. From here Custer passed along the crest of the bluffs for fully ¾ mile, in full view of the river and of the valley over across it. Custer hurried his men, going at a gallop most of the time. Reno and his command were plainly seen by Custer's whole command while marching this ¾ mile. On the first line of bluffs back from the river there are two high peaks . . . now called Reno peaks. For some distance south of these there is a high ridge running parallel with the river, but not so high as the peaks. Custer's command passed into [Cedar Coulee] just behind this ridge and the peaks and went down it, going in a direction directly north and coming out into the bed of [Medicine Tail Creek] about a mile from its mouth. . . . From the moment Custer's command commenced to descend [into Cedar Coulee], it passed out of view of Reno's battalion, but Bouyer and his four scouts kept to the left of Custer, on the crest of the high ridge and peaks, and at all times could command a view of the river and the bottoms beyond. Before Bouyer got to the peaks, he left three of his Crow scouts behind, with orders to watch the Indian camp in the valley opposite and any movements of Indians in Custer's rear. Taking Curley with him, he passed on and over the peaks, and then on a course parallel with that of Custer (directly north) until they came down into the bed of [Medicine Tail Creek], where they met Custer about ½ mile from the river. When they got to the top of the first of these peaks, they looked across and observed that Reno's command was fighting. At the sight of this, Bouyer could hardly restrain himself and shouted and waved his hat excitedly for some little time. Undoubtedly Bouyer is the man seen by some in Reno's command to wave his hat, for Custer never went to the peaks or high ridge; and when the hat was waved, Custer was entirely out of sight from Reno's position and must have been so for several minutes.

After Bouyer and Curley joined Custer, the command passed rapidly down to Ford B [near mouth of Medicine Tail Creek]. As soon as the soldiers came in sight of the village, the Sioux gave voice to a "heap big yell, like dog," as Curley expressed it, and when Custer's soldiers got closer, there was "heap shoot, bang! bang! bang!" The troops did not dismount here, and some of them rode into the river [Little Bighorn] before stopping and turning back. Curley saw one soldier gallop across the river just below the ford at great speed, pass up the bank, through the Sioux posted along it, and come out into full view on the open ground beyond the ford. The Sioux defending the ford he observed to be all dismounted. He afterwards learned that these were men who did not have time to get their ponies, which were grazing back on the hills west of the village.

> *"When Martin got to the top of the ridge he looked down in the village and saw Indians charging like a swarm of bees toward the ford, waving buffalo hides. At the same time he saw Custer retreating up the open country."*
>
> ***Interview with Trumpeter John Martin***

When Custer withdrew from the ford, he proceeded down the river for some distance and then struck out for higher ground in columns of fours, going direct to the point where markers are found at the southeast point of the battlefield.... Before they got to this point, Mitch Bouyer lost his horse. Indians were now in front and in the ravines on both sides, and a strong force of Indians were coming up in the rear. Curley says the command was being driven like a herd of horses, and the only thing that could be done was to charge the enemy in the direction that was thought to be most advantageous to go and then only to have them close in on all sides. The front was driving the Indians and the rear was being driven. In ascending to the elevation now marked by slabs for [Lt. James] Calhoun and [Lt. J. J.] Crittenden, an attempt was made to cover the retreat until some kind of a stand could be made. Men were left at the [present site of the] Finley marker, and some of the troops dismounted just beyond this, Curley staking his horse with the rest. The dismounted men then tried to drive the Indians from the gulch ahead, but the men left in the rear were quickly killed, and the advance of the Indians from that direction was hardly checked at all.

Custer stopped at this point for a brief space of time, and what was decided upon had to be done in great haste. There was a hurried conference of officers, and Bouyer told Curley that the subject of conversation was to the effect that if the command could make a stand somewhere, the remainder of the regiment would probably soon come up and relieve them.

In William R. Leigh's action-filled painting of the Custer fight, the artist chose to view events from the Indians' point of view; the cavalry commander and his men are only dimly visible through the smoke and dust of battle.

Personally, Bouyer did not expect that relief would come, as he thought the other commands had been scared out. Bouyer thought the orders would be to charge straight ahead, drive the Indians from the ravine, and try to find more favorable ground. For a moment or two the fire of the Indians slackened in this direction, and it was thought the plan could be carried out, when a large force of warriors swept around that corner as if in anticipation of the intentions of the soldiers, and the scheme had to be given up. There was then "heap shoot, shoot, shoot" (Curley clapping his hands after the manner of the sign language to indicate the rapidity of the firing). It was now plain that no advance could be made in the intended direction, and Custer struck out westward, it being understood that some of the soldiers (probably Calhoun's troops) would try to hold the ground at this corner. Curley says, however, that the men would not stand, all who could do so either going for their horses or running in the direction of the general retreat, which was headed for the highest ground, now occupied by the monument. In doing so they had to run the gauntlet of a fire from a ravine full of warriors to the northward and a large force of Indians shooting over the long ridge extending westerly to the [present site of the] monument. Curley said that while on the way to where the Calhoun marker now stands, a few men had started in the direction of the monument along the southside of the ridge, but as the Indians charged up from the direction of the river these men were driven over the crest and fell in with the line of retreat.

Most of the men able to do so had now followed the line of retreat down the gully and diagonally up the slope toward the monument. In this the men with the gray horses appeared to be keeping well together, but it seemed to him that the other companies were getting badly mixed up. Mitch Bouyer now turned to Curley, saying that Tom Custer had suggested that the scouts had better save themselves if they could. Bouyer advised Curley to try it, and Curley said he told Bouyer he would do so if he (Bouyer) also would try it. Bouyer declined by saying that he was too badly wounded, and he would have to stay to fight it out, although he believed they would all be killed. Curley now decided to stay no longer. He turned around to look for his horse, and there he found a hand-to-hand encounter. As for him the Sioux were a little too quick, and he saw a warrior running off with his horse at the end of the lariet. Just then a mounted Indian was shot off his pony. Catching the warrior's horse and taking his Winchester and belt of cartridge to replace his own weapon which was dirty and working badly, he mounted and rode out. The mass of Indians had now charged around on the flanks of the retreating soldiers, and Curley, by riding around the corner as though one of the charging Indians and giving voice to the

"CUSTER'S LAST FIGHT" BY WILLIAM R. LEIGH, 1939, WOOLAROC MUSEUM, BARTLESVILLE, OKLAHOMA

Sioux yell or war cry, passed out without being recognized and was soon in a ravine, out of sight. He went up the right-hand ravine . . . and stopped to look back only twice. He estimates his last look at the battlefield must have been one-half hour after leaving, and the soldiers were still fighting, although he could not discern anything as to the formation. He traveled on a wide circuit and met the steamer *Far West* lying at the mouth of the Little Bighorn, where he got aboard and remained for several days. . . .

Foolish Elk, Sioux Warrior

(Portion of notes from an interview conducted at Valentine, Nebraska, on September 22, 1908, with the assistance of interpreters Louis Roubideaux of Rosebud and Mr. Shaw of Valentine.)

Foolish Elk said he was an Ogalalla Sioux fifty-four years old, and on the day of the Custer battle fought with Crazy Horse. He appeared to be the opposite of what his name might imply, as I found him to be a man of more than average intelligence. . . .

He said he was in the fight against Crook on the Rosebud about a week before the Custer battle. . . . In this fight the Indians thought they had won a victory, but it was understood that other troops were in the Indian country, and they concluded to go to the big village with Sitting Bull on the Greasy Grass Creek (Little Bighorn) without further loss of men and ammunition. . . . They arrived at the village the day before the battle (June 24). There was then some kind of vague report that soldiers were coming, but they did not know whether it was the command of their recent enemy, Crook (Lone Star), or Custer whom they knew as "Long Yellow Hair." In the village there were representatives of seven tribes of the Sioux. There was not much concern about the soldiers, as the Indians thought they had enough men to whip any force that would come against them, seeing that the Indians were all together for once—all the different tribes.

On June 25 the fighting started at the Uncapapa tepees (by Reno at south end of village). On the part of the Indians there was no organized resistance, but men from all the tribes who happened to have their horses grabbed up their guns and went up the river to join in the fight. The fight did not last long, and before the larger part of the Indians could get there, they had chased the soldiers out of the river valley and up into the bluffs. The soldiers retreated across the river at the nearest point they could reach and seemed to be in too much of a hurry to take their back track to the ford where they had come into the valley.

Before the Indians had decided what they would do with these soldiers who made the first attack, a force of soldiers was seen coming from the east (Custer). These men sat on their horses and fired across the river into the village, without getting into it. He afterward heard that one man rode his horse over into the village and was killed, but he did not see him.

> ***"On the day of the battle no Indian recognized Custer, either alive or dead. They had remembered him as a man with long hair, but his hair was cut."***
>
> ***Interview with Foolish Elk, Sioux Warrior***

The Indians were now getting their horses in from the hills and soon came up in large numbers. Some crossed the stream farther down and others crossed the ford and followed after Custer in overwhelming numbers. They could not see how such a small force of soldiers had any chance to stand against them. The Indians were between Custer and the river all the time coming up and getting around to the east of him, passing around both his front and rear. Custer was following the ridges, and the Indians were keeping abreast of him in the hollows and ravines. Personally, he [Foolish Elk] was with the Indians to the east, or on Custer's right. Custer charged the Indians twice . . . but could not drive them away, and then the battle became furious. It did not appear to him that a stand was made by Custer's men anywhere except at the [present site of the] monument. He was in the gully and saw the soldiers killed on the side hill (Keogh) as they "marched" toward the high ground at end of ridge (monument). They made no stand here, but all were going toward the high ground at end of ridge. The gray horses went up in a body; then came bay horses and men on foot all mixed together. The men on the horses did not stop to fight, but went ahead as fast as they could go. The men on foot, however, were shooting as they passed along. When the horses got to the top of the ridge the gray ones and bays became mingled, and the soldiers with them were all in confusion. The Indians were so numerous that the soldiers could not go any further, and they knew that they had to die. . . .

The Indians captured many horses that were not wounded, and they got much ammunition out of the saddles and out of the belts of the killed and wounded. Many squaws followed the course of the battle and stripped the dead. He did not remain to see any of the wounded soldiers killed, but thought most of them must have been killed before the general firing stopped. He did not know whether or not any of the dead soldiers were scalped. No soldiers, dead or alive, were taken into the village. He wanted to know why I inquired on this point. I told him that it might be supposed that some of the soldiers were taken alive and tortured. He then laughed and said that had I seen the amount of firing that was done on the battlefield I would never suppose that any of the soldiers

Eight years in the making, Edgar S. Paxson's giant canvas "Custer's Last Stand" is considered by many experts to be the most accurate re-creation of the final bloody, confusion-filled minutes of battle on Custer Ridge.

could come out alive. I then asked him how he could account for some eighteen bodies that could not be found. He said he could give no explanation, but felt sure that all would have been found had those in search of them looked far enough.

On the day of the battle no Indian recognized Custer, either alive or dead. They had remembered him as a man with long hair, but his hair was cut. On the next day one of the Uncapapa men who knew him recognized him from his features, and later his horse was recognized among the captured animals. This was the sorrel horse "Dandy" with white face and white feet.

Turtle Rib, Sioux Warrior

(Notes from an interview conducted at Valentine, Nebraska, on September 22, 1908.)

Now sixty years old, a member of Minneconjou Sioux. He fought under Lamedeer. He was not in the battle with Crook. They came into the village from the direction of the Rosebud, arriving on the day before the battle. The soldiers were following their trail. Three days before this their men had engaged a considerable band of Crows. The village was arranged in camps of the different tribes in the following order, down the river: Uncapapa, Blackfeet (under Black Moon), Minneconjou, Sans Arc, Ogalalla, Northern Cheyenne, Brule (these last two should probably be reversed).

The fighting (Reno) started against the camp of the Uncapapas. He [Turtle Rib] was asleep when the soldiers were first reported in the valley but got in before the fighting stopped and killed one of the Rees. He saw other Rees getting away with a drove of Sioux ponies. The fighting against Reno did not last long. He could not say how many minutes, but only a few.

He did not see the fighting at Ford B, but when he passed back through the village to go against the soldiers on the high ground across the river (Custer) the women were stampeded and the children were crying. They said soldiers had come over the hill from the east and had been driven back. When he got up with the soldiers, there was a running fight with

PAINTED 1899, WHITNEY GALLERY OF WESTERN ART, BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER, CODY, WYOMING

some of the soldiers on foot. Those who kept their horses seemed to be stampeded. Some were going toward the [present site of the] monument, and some were trying to ride back the way they came. Those on foot seemed to be the coolest and fought the hardest. No stand was made except at the end of the long ridge (where Custer fell), and here the bay and gray horses were all mixed together. There was a big dust, and the Indians were running all around the locality much excited and shooting into the soldiers. He saw one soldier ride across a hollow and try to get away. He was the third Indian to give chase. The soldier rode like the wind and appeared to be getting away from them, when he killed himself. He could not recall the direction in which this soldier went.

When he returned, the fight was nearly over. The Indians were up close, and the soldiers were shooting with pistols. He saw some of the soldiers shoot each other. The Indians were all around. Some of them shot arrows and in the smoke and big dust hit their own men. His own nephew was killed by a soldier's bullet. The Indians had many killed and more wounded. It took a good many to bring water up from river to the wounded Indians. He never heard the number of Indians killed.

They captured many horses and got much ammunition from them. They took no soldiers off the battlefield alive. He supposed them all killed where they lay. The Indians were so busy caring for their own wounded and going off to fight Reno that they did not stop to scalp or mutilate soldiers. What the squaws did after this he did not know, as scalping of dead or mutilation would be nothing uncommon with Indians. The Indians did not recognize Custer fighting or afterward among the dead.

Charles DeRudio, First Lieutenant, Company A, 7th Cavalry
(Notes from portion of an interview conducted on February 2, 1910.)

On the morning of June 27, [Col. John] Gibbon came up the valley, and [Lt. James] Bradley, who was with the flankers on the left, discovered the dead on Custer ridge. Later in the day, when Benteen was saddling up to go over to Custer battlefield, DeRudio asked to go along . . . . They followed the trail of the five companies to the river down Medicine Tail Coulee. The whole command of five companies had gone nearly to the river, and two shod horses had gone quite to the river bank and the tracks seemed to indicate that they had shied around quickly in some blue clay as if turned suddenly by their riders. Says Custer's trail was in column of fours part of the way but in one or two narrow places had changed to column of twos. The first dead man was near Ford B and about 150 yards from the river . . . . He was neither stripped nor scalped.

On the battlefield he counted 214 dead, Bradley counted 215 and Benteen 212. Does not recollect appearance of dead around Keogh.

> *". . . the dead bodies lay thick, and among these were identified men from all of the five companies. We came to the conclusion then and there that the fight had been a rout, a running fight."*
>
> *Pvt. Jacob Adams*

Custer lay on top of a conical knoll. Five or six horses lay as if they been led there and shot down for a barricade, as empty shells lay behind them . . . .

Jacob Adams, Private, Company H, 7th Cavalry
(Portion of an interview conducted at Vincennes, Indiana, on October 14, 1910.)

I went with Benteen over to Custer battlefield on p.m. of June 27. Down near the river and before we came to any dead men we found three or four dead horses. Custer lay within a circle of dead horses on a flat place at the end of the ridge. Tom Custer lay back of him and not near the horses. Quite a distance east of Custer (down near Keogh and between Keogh and Custer) the dead bodies lay thick, and among these were identified men from all of the five companies. We came to the conclusion then and there that the fight had been a rout, a running fight.

When we found Old Comanche [Captain Keogh's horse, famed as the "lone survivor" of Custer's Last Stand] *he was sitting on his haunches, braced back on his forefeet. We lifted him up in his feeble condition, and he followed us around. . . .*

After we left Pease Bottom, we camped north side of Yellowstone, opposite Rosebud. After we broke camp there I saw a dead soldier and dead horse south of Yellowstone and within sight of Yellowstone—only a few miles from it. The body was then thought to be one of L troop men who had been with Custer and scalped. The carbine was with the body and all equipment, and the leather sling was still over the shoulder. We concluded that both the man and the horse had been wounded and had gotten that far and given out.

Kenneth Hammer, *who edited Walter Mason Camp's notes for the book from which this article is excerpted, is an economic historian and writer at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater. A long-time student of the Little Bighorn, he has visited the Custer battlefield several times. His books include* Men with Custer *and* The Springfield Carbine on the Western Frontier.

David Douglas:

BOTANICAL COLUMBUS

& Plant Hunter Extraordinary

by Trevor Holloway

MORE THAN A CENTURY ago at a churchyard in Scone, Perthshire, botanists from many lands erected a towering stone column in memory of a native son of the village who had risen from the humble role of gardener's helper to become one of Scotland's most noted men of science—David Douglas, botanist, explorer, and plant hunter extraordinary. Impressive though the monument may be, it is insignificant compared to the countless living memorials to Douglas which adorn the parks and gardens of Great Britain in the form of a host of trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers, cuttings and seeds for which he introduced from the corners of the earth.

Some five thousand miles to the west, in the locale of this Scotsman's most significant contributions to the natural sciences, he is less well remembered. But it is here, in the vast forestlands of the U.S. Pacific Northwest, that the most stately monuments to Douglas's memory may be found—the towering fir trees that bear his name.

Born in 1799, one of six children of the village stonemason, David Douglas is said to have shown early evidence of an inquisitive nature and a deep love for the outdoor world —but of the virtues of perseverance and industry that would later characterize him as well, there was no indication at all. Indeed, many people predicted that the boy would come to no good end. He was constantly playing truant from school or disturbing the peace of the neighborhood with all manner of high-spirited mischief, and after his first school teacher finally threw up her hands in despair, David was transferred to the school of a formidable "Mr. Wilson" in Perth.

The school at Perth was three miles from Scone, which meant that the boy had a six-mile walk every day. Far from being dismayed at this daily trek, he was elated, for it offered him the opportunity of making new discoveries about nature and her ways. What his pockets contained on returning home each evening was anybody's guess; the treasures might include anything from a rare flower to a wriggling grass snake.

Apparently Mr. Wilson had no more success with his recalcitrant charge than his predecessor had. In desperation, David's father took him away from school at the age of eleven and apprenticed him as a gardener's boy at Scone Palace. At this turn of events the boy's joy knew no bounds; on the lush thousand-acre estate he would be devoting all of his energies to his beloved flowers and plants, learning their innermost secrets.

There was no holding back the "wild" boy of Scone once he had found his calling. During the seven years of his apprenticeship, David's skills as a gardener rapidly matured, and he read every book on natural history that he could lay his hands on. But like many another adventure-minded boy, his favorite volume is said to have been Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*; for him the story sparked a burning desire to see distant lands, seeking plants, trees, and flowers that gardeners had never set eyes upon.

In 1818 David Douglas secured employment at Sir Robert Preston's estate near Culross, noted for the variety of its plantings. After two years of work and study there, he moved on to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Glasgow, where he came to the notice of the celebrated Professor William Hooker, one of the British Empire's leading botanists. Recognizing Douglas's talents and potential in the field of natural science, Hooker undertook to personally tutor him and to employ him as an assistant on botanical excursions to the Highlands.

At the age of twenty-four, on the recommendation of Professor Hooker, Douglas obtained a position on the staff of

As the first botanist to spend an extended period in the Pacific Northwest, David Douglas brought hundreds of new species of plants, shrubs, and trees to the attention of science. He is best remembered for the Douglas fir (right).

DAVID MUENCH

the noted Horticultural Society of London (today the Royal Horticultural Society) as a field collector. It was a most fortuitous assignment, both for Douglas and the Society. At this time horticulture was the subject of unprecedented interest in the British Isles. The propagation of new and rare species of plants from recently explored territories overseas was especially in vogue, and to satisfy the clamor of its distinguished patrons for such prizes, the Society planned to send Douglas on a collecting expedition to the west coast of North America.

Plans for this undertaking were delayed, however, and in the summer of 1823 Douglas booked passage in the ship *Ann Maria* for a more mundane assignment—a visit to the eastern United States and Canada to study commercial fruit tree culture and to "collect seeds and specimens . . . not in cultivation, or not described." Received with hospitality by North America's most noted horticulturists, Douglas spent four months collecting and purchasing a wide variety of plants and seedlings, visiting the leading botanical gardens and collections, and traveling as far west as Lake Erie. Of special interest to him during a visit to Philadelphia were a few precious western American plants grown from seeds gathered by Lewis and Clark on their overland trek to the Pacific Coast in 1804–06, and by the Long Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in 1819–20.

Returning to England, the young collector met with a warm reception back at the Society: "The mission was executed by Mr. Douglas with a success beyond expectation. He obtained many plants which were much wanted and greatly increased our collection of fruit trees."

SIX MONTHS LATER, in July of 1824, David Douglas was off again, this time on the voyage of his dreams. Provided with a berth in the Hudson's Bay Company vessel *William and Ann*, he was bound for the Columbia River by way of Cape Horn. Scheduled for a year's stay as guest of the company at its forts—virtually the sole outposts of civilization in the Pacific Northwest—he would be the first botanist to spend a prolonged period in this region.

En route to the Pacific the ship stopped for some days at Rio de Janeiro, and (as would be his pattern at every future opportunity) Douglas used the time to comb the countryside for interesting plants. He was successful and was able to dispatch two boxes of extremely rare orchids from Rio to London.

Rounding the Horn and turning north, the vessel anchored briefly off lonely Juan Fernández, the legendary island of Douglas's boyhood hero. The exotic scenery delighted him, and in addition to collecting some seventy rare and uncatalogued plants, he sowed a plentiful supply of vegetable seeds in the hope that any future Robinson Crusoe might benefit thereby.

Off the Oregon and Washington coasts the *William and Ann* was buffeted by rough seas and unfavorable winds—"in the fullest extent a thousand times worse than Cape Horn," Douglas noted—and was forced to delay her entry into the Columbia River for nearly six weeks. Finally, on April 7, 1825, after a voyage of more than eight months, the vessel slipped over the treacherous Columbia River bar and anchored near the north shore of the river. (A few years later the *William and Ann* would be lost with all hands in these same hazardous waters.) Crossing to Fort George, the Hudson's Bay trading post on the south shore, Douglas and his companions were welcomed a few days later by the chief factor for the region, white-haired, patriarchal Dr. John McLoughlin. Douglas was later to note gratefully in his journal that McLoughlin had "assured me . . . everything in his power would be done to promote the views of the Society. Since [that time] I have all along experienced every attention in his power, horses, canoes, and people when they could be spared to accompany on my journeys."

Because Fort George was being phased out as a Hudson's Bay post, the group proceeded by boat about ninety miles upstream, where a new and larger headquarters—Fort Vancouver—was under construction. Now began the most arduous (and exhilarating) period in David Douglas's career. Operating out of Fort Vancouver, traveling sometimes in the company of voyageurs or Indian guides, at other times alone, he undertook a series of plant hunting expeditions that carried him through thousands of miles of wild and often unmapped territory.

By the end of 1825 Douglas had made two major botanizing expeditions back down the Columbia to the ocean, on one of these following the coast north clear to the Olympic Peninsula, where he was finally forced to turn back by the rains typical of that region which "fell in torrents without intermission." He made two other trips upstream as far as the Great Falls of the Columbia (Celilo Falls), where he watched with fascination as Indians with nets mounted on long poles scooped up "prodigious numbers" of salmon. On the second of these expeditions Douglas took it into his mind to scale the heights of the great mountain range through which the waters of the Columbia cut; when his Indian guide learned of his plan, "he became forthwith sick, and found an excuse for exempting himself from this undertaking." But another guide was secured, and after three days of "the most laborious undertakings I ever experienced, the way was so rough," Douglas reached the summit of the ridge on the north side of the river. Two days later he repeated the feat on the south shore. These are the first recorded ascents of any mountains of the Cascade Range.

"The Grass Man," as the young botanist soon became known to the puzzled Indians of the Columbia River region, must have presented a strange sight on these jaunts. He preferred to dress somewhat in the manner of his hero, Crusoe, with deerskin trousers and a floppy hat woven for him by an Indian girl. Personal comforts, with the exception of a

Roaming the moisture-laden glens of Northwest forests, Douglas found a botanical Eden. (In six months he collected 499 species of plants). This knee-high jungle of ferns, grasses, and other plants thrives on the Olympic Peninsula.

JOHSEL NAMKUNG

blanket and a tin of his beloved tea ("the monarch of all food after fatiguing journeys"), were usually dispensed with in favor of a precious supply of paper for drying and packing the plants and specimens he collected. The gun he carried over his shoulder proved useful not only for obtaining food but for shooting down branches and cones too lofty to reach.

Douglas's first shipment of plants and trees from Fort Vancouver in 1825, representing nearly five hundred species, included scores of new, rare, and valuable specimens (the Oregon grape, California poppy, vine maple, madrona, and wild hyacinth, to name a few) which won for him high praises from the Horticultural Society. Included in this first consignment were seeds of the giant fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*) known today as the Douglas fir. One of the world's most beautiful trees, with thick, furrowed bark and a massive trunk as much as forty feet in circumference, its lovely blue-green crown often rises to a height of two hundred feet or more. (Douglas was not the first to describe this species—it had been noted by scientists on the Vancouver Expedition in 1792—but he was the first to obtain its seeds and to introduce it into cultivation.) In his journal the young botanist predicted that "the wood may be found very useful for a variety of domestic purposes: the young slender ones exceedingly well adapted for making ladders and scaffold poles . . . the larger timber for more important purposes." Today the Douglas fir is the preeminent tree in the Northwest lumber industry.

AS HIS FIRST YEAR in the wilderness drew to a close, David Douglas realized that his collections of Northwest flora were still far from complete; therefore, "after a careful consideration as to the propriety of remaining for a season longer than instructed to do, I have resolved not to leave for another year to come. . . . If the motive which induces me to make this arrangement should not be approved . . . most cheerfully will I labour for this year without any remuneration." The Society had no objections, however, and Douglas's second year on the Columbia turned out to be every bit as activity-filled and productive as his first.

In March of 1826 Douglas accompanied an eastbound brigade of voyageurs up the Columbia River into present-day eastern Washington. At the mouth of the Spokane River the express—carrying as part of its cargo a shipment of seeds gathered by Douglas—turned east toward Hudson's Bay; the botanist continued north on the Columbia for a visit to the area around Kettle Falls. "Of all the places I have seen this is by far the finest," he noted; "high rugged mountains, fertile valleys, the country abounding with game." Later, accompanied by an Indian guide, he branched south to explore the Blue Mountains of Oregon, apparently becoming the first white man to penetrate that little-known region.

When Douglas finally returned to Fort Vancouver on August 29, he had completed a botanizing tour of the entire Columbia Basin with visits to Fort Walla Walla, Fort Okanogan, Fort Colville, and Spokane House. Moreover, he had found time to accompany another brigade up the Snake River as far as present-day Lewiston, Idaho.

Ever since his arrival in the Northwest, Douglas had been anxious to track down one particular species of pine. He had seen the Indians along the Willamette River chewing unusually large, sweet-flavored pine seeds; by means of sign language he learned that these came from an outsized tree which grew in the mostly unknown country of the Umpqua Indians in southern Oregon. Finally, after his return to Fort Vancouver in the fall of 1826, Douglas set out on a two-month quest for the mysterious tree.

Accompanying an overland fur brigade as far south as the Umpqua River, Douglas then turned toward the hill country with a single Indian guide. The journey turned into a veritable catalogue of mishaps and privation, and graphically illustrates the difficulties Douglas regularly faced in the Northwest. Much of the progress was slow, involving hacking a way through thick underbrush; at times the plant hunter was desperately short of food; he was frequently soaked; he caught a chill; at one point he tumbled into a ravine and lay unconscious for five hours. Then, storms: "Last night was one of the most dreadful I ever witnessed," he recorded on October 25. "The rain, driven by the violence of the wind, rendered it impossible for me to keep any fire, and to add misery to my affliction my tent was blown down at midnight. . . . Sleep of course was not to be had, every ten or fifteen minutes immense trees falling producing a crash as if the earth was cleaving asunder, which with the thunder peal on peal before the echo of the former died away, and the lightning in zigzag and forked flashes, had on my mind a sensation more than I can ever give vent to; and more so, when I think of the place and my circumstances."

To his dismay, on the following morning Douglas was confronted by an Indian who strung his bow and would have shot the naturalist had he not had the presence of mind to lay down his gun and offer a gift of beads. The two shared a pipe of tobacco and by the use of much sign language Douglas learned that he was within twenty miles of his goal (near present-day Roseburg, Oregon).

Douglas's amazement upon first seeing the tree we know today as the sugar pine (*Pinus lambertiana*) was such that all his trials were forgotten. The gigantic and beautiful trees were too vast for him to measure as they stood, but one which had been blown down by the wind he found to have a total length of 215 feet and a maximum circumference of 58 feet. Douglas took careful note of every detail, then set about shooting down a few of the foot-long cones from the tops of the trees. It was a red-letter day in the career of this dedicated young plant hunter.

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Almost certainly the most momentous event for David Douglas during his years in the Northwest was the discovery, after weeks of searching, of the lofty and majestic sugar pine of southern Oregon (left).

FORESTRY SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

A Matter of Opinion

Ranald MacKenzie: Forgotten Hero?

As the one-hundredth anniversary of the death of George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn approaches (June 25, 1976), the qualities of leadership of this most controversial of nineteenth-century army officers, his degree of success as an Indian fighter, and the place he should hold in history will inevitably become the subject of renewed interest, scrutiny, and debate by historians and enthusiasts alike. One reader who feels that Custer has received more than his due is William Davidson of Alamosa, Colorado, who in the following letter proposes his own candidate for the frontier army's most effective Indian-fighting officer.

The Editors

IT IS ONE OF THE IRONIES of our time, and a monument to press agentry over a full century, that so many historians and ordinary citizens dither about George A. Custer and his career and debacle at the Little Bighorn—but so few have ever heard or thought about Ranald MacKenzie, who was everything that Custer, his wife, and their flacks would have liked the golden-haired general to be.

Just now, when having been successful at curbing the hostile tribes is becoming suspect or even antisocial, a few people are starting to pay serious attention to MacKenzie. But those who have followed him (many of whom find it now vogue sociology to disapprove) generally feel he was the most effective Indian-fighting senior officer the United States produced in the last half-century of its wars with aborigines.

Custer made his reputation as a "gallant" cavalry leader —a term very much worn out by the press of the time and historians afterward—in the Civil War, but much of that glitter was acquired by victories over Southern cavalry forces which were depleted of men, horses, medicines, and arms. His great successes were registered against troops who were hardly ghosts of the Confederate cavalrymen like J. E. B. Stuart and other pre-Gettysburg legends. And afterwards, against hostile Plains tribes, Custer prospered against forces seldom equal to those he applied. He took a sizable part of an excellent (if oversung) Seventh Cavalry regiment to its death uselessly and in direct violation of orders.

But MacKenzie: he lost no battle and he squandered no part of his Fourth Cavalry regiment (one which most professionals estimated considerably above Custer's Seventh). He was, however it may disturb today's partisans of the Indians, the Apocalypse on one horse for whatever tribes he was sent to control.

Consider the record: Emerging from the Civil War as "the most brilliant officer in the Army" in Ulysses S. Grant's judgement (an opinion of enormously greater professional weight than the lurid press burblings about Custer), MacKenzie in 1873 utterly destroyed the warmaking capability of the Comanche Indians. Forsaking grand gestures and plumed-knight heroics, he chased them until he simply captured and obliterated their large horse herds.

The Comancheria never again posed a serious threat to western Texas, where they had eluded rangers, lesser commanders than MacKenzie, and the Spaniards and Mexicans before them for centuries. It earned MacKenzie the undying hatred of many, then and now, including writers like John Graves who grew up in western Texas safely removed by two generations from the once-abiding menace of Comanche savagery.

Next, called on by William T. Sherman to curb the chronic raiding of the Mescalero Apaches, the Lipan Apaches, and the Kickapoos, he struck from Fort Clark, Texas, deep into the Mexican state of Coahuila, found and spoiled the target tribes in an action that left them forever unable to muster a serious threat against the south Texas frontier.

MacKenzie was allotted the job because of his standing with Grant, the methodical near-perfection of his regiment in the field, and his reputation for driving men—notably himself—to their limits in miserable circumstances. He was committing under War Department orders, and with scant hope of being salvaged if he were caught and seized by the Mexicans whose territory he was violating, a flagrant infraction of international law. He carried it off, as usual, with cold-blooded precision, shrugging off and then standing off

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The American Cowboy: Three Interpretations

REVIEWED BY JACK BURROWS

WHEN that venerable TV classic, *Gunsmoke*, was cancelled last year and Marshall Dillon gimped off to those big rerun pastures, a spate of newspaper and magazine articles proclaimed the cowboy defunct. Assassinations and Vietnam, we were told, are still fresh in memory, and the cowboy is uncomfortably redolent of the gun, of simple and violent solutions to complex problems. "The Western," said Western scholar, Richard Etulain, "has become a useful index for what people are thinking in America." A traumatized America, seeking understanding rather than mindless escape, has rejected the cowboy.

The Cowboy with photography by Bank Langmore and text by Ron Tyler *(William Morrow, New York, 1975; 251 pp., intro., illus., biblio., notes, index, $19.95).*

The Cowboy: A Contemporary Photographic Study by Robert Reynolds *(Graphic Arts Center, Portland, 1975; illus., $21.50).*

The Life and Times of the American Cowboy by Caleb Pirtle and the Texas Cowboy Artists Association *(Oxmoor House, Birmingham, Ala., 1975; illus., notes, $50.00).*

Perhaps. But these three beautiful volumes stand in eloquent refutation of this contention. Here is the real cowboy, carefully limned by paintings, photos, and text from those cold-eyed killers whose unfocused rages compose the leitmotif of the "psychological Western" and who somehow evoke memories of Vietnam rather than the Old West, or yet from those garrulous old solecists of the "Me'n Hoppy" school who inhabit a cinematic *déjà vu* into which Hollywood has labored irrevocably to fix them.

In *The Cowboy,* Bank Langmore's imaginative color photo-art of the modern cowman, along with the comparative use of old photographs and Ron Tyler's perceptive narrative, establishes and fixes the iconography of the Old West and the new. We learn the cowboy not only lives, but lives in distinct categories: the dudes who affect the fancy trappings; the lads who live in the nimbus of Wyatt Earp and Wild Bill Hickok, and the real cowboys, by estimate "eight hundred hardcore," whose distinction lies in *thinking* like cowboys. The latter are mutant cousins to the nineteenth-century drifters, or saddle tramps, self-contained men who know precisely who they are and feel no need to play games or indulge in a "search for self."

Langmore's photos are occasionally contrived. A group of punchers bathing in a stream self-consciously wear hats. One recalls movies in which the cowboy sits soapily in a bathtub, hat on, pistol within easy reach. But most often he captures the cowboy in an almost tactile fleshiness, elemental in his occupations and in repose, and casually organic as he hunkers against a fence, tin cup in hand, or wearily rides "drag," face tucked into a bandana against a sheen of dust.

Except for a sprinkling of pithy captions, Robert Reynolds's *Contemporary Study* carries no text. Reynolds lets his photos tell the story, and they do so with bucolic charm. Like Langmore, Reynolds has bequeathed a resonance and magnitude to the life of the cowboy that take on symmetries of irony when one vainly searches the open, guileless faces for some reflection of the Hollywood stereotype and the violence America has presumably observed and rejected.

In *Life and Times,* Caleb Pirtle and the Texas Cowboy Artists Association have produced a surpassingly beautiful, cowhide-bound book that squeaks like a new saddle when opened. The paintings of these legatees of the Russell and Remington school of artist-illustrators are nostalgically explicit. Caparisoned horsemen ride immutable western landscapes in the glowing ambience that illuminates the world of Russell and Remington. One has a sense of eternal verities, of men who live in consonance with the land and feel no need to conquer it. The portraiture is outstanding, although the webbed and leathery faces reflect a homespun and incorruptible benignity rather than "warts and all," save for an occasional no-nonsense hombre like Molines's "One Riot, One Ranger."

Pirtle's narrative is curiously unrelated to the incandescent serenity of the paintings. Anecdotal, humorous, gusty, knowledgeable, the text relates the story of the Texas trail drive as the ultimate cowboy experience. And what an experience it was: lice, fleas, and heat that dried up the juices; cold and snow that killed walking horses and cattle; lightning and thunder at night that stampeded herds and set riders on the dead

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The Great United States Exploring Expedition

REVIEWED BY DON GREAME KELLEY

IT ALL STARTED, apparently, in "Symmes' Hole." The phrase signified an innovative geophysical system proclaimed "to all the world" in 1818 by Capt. John Cleves Symmes, Jr., U.S.

The Great United States Exploring Expedition of 1838–1842 by William Stanton *(University of California, Berkeley, 1975; 433 pp., illus., maps, biblio., notes, index, $14.95).*

Army (Ret.), to wit, "that the earth is hollow and habitable within; containing a number of solid concentric spheres, . . . and that it is open at the poles." It was nurtured by Jeremiah N. Reynolds of Ohio, an eloquent, not exactly disinterested advocate of the national expedition Symmes dreamed of—a polar search for the opening, discovery of which would at one stroke place the young United States on a cultural/scientific par with its inclined-to-be-patronizing elders, the Old World nations. And it found a kind of conclusion, after twenty-three years, when specimens and data—not just from the Arctic but from around the world—were deposited with the brand-new National Institute of Washington, forerunner of the Smithsonian Institution and its National Museum. "It" was of course the United States Exploring Expedition (also called the Wilkes Expedition, after its able, controversial, naval commander).

This detailed account by William Stanton, professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh, provides us with perhaps the best grounded, most deeply penetrating, biography of the "First Great National Expedition" yet to appear. But to say this is not to denigrate David B. Tyler's *The Wilkes Expedition* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), the one modern account with which to compare the volume under review. Stanton has aptly observed in his prefatory disclaimer that "the historian bears a remarkable burden. . . . His very touch is transforming." If reading the two aforementioned books is often like hearing two different

LT. CHARLES WILKES, U.S.N.

stories, it means, at worst, that separate spectrum-analyses of sources are bound to yield results of varying chroma; and at best, that the reader's insight is doubly nourished. Of the two authors, Stanton discourses at greater length, for instance, on the *two decades* of ego-tripping and bureaucratic snafus that occurred between the idea of *a* national expedition and the actual departure of Wilkes's flagship *Vincennes* and accompanying vessels on a four-year voyage of circumnavigation; and Stanton clearly has more to say on the aftermath of specimen shuffling, journal and monograph publishing (or lack thereof), proprietorship jockeying, and credit-taking—not to mention courts-martial. On the off-again, on-again, crank-up and wind-down phases of the whole buffobravura (but, in the large, estimable) enterprise, it is Stanton who probes deeper for the enjoyment of the more involved, or more leisured, reader.

As to the utterly absorbing shipboard story of geographical and scientific discovery, personal adventure, and interpersonal relationships, each of these most recent U.S.E.E. biographers has developed his account with great insight, literary skill, and a fine feeling for the "plot," the characters, and the substantive, amazingly copious record that the naval officers and scientists severally created out of their common but not commonplace experience. From Wilkes's five-volume [1845] narrative and the numerous published and unpublished journals of other principals, to replete archives of letters, reports, trial records, etc., no comparable nineteenth-century undertaking perhaps was so many-sidedly documented and thus so difficult of balanced interpretative compression to less than five hundred pages of readable text. In each of these books readers of THE AMERICAN WEST will find of especial interest the chapters describing the considerable role of the Wilkes Expedition in the 1840s finale to the international drama involving Oregon.

Keeping to the book under review, let it be said that Stanton has reillumined with signal definition a major happening of our first American century which can both entertain and inspire us at the end of our second, and he has done so in a manner that should ensure keeping the light of it alive well into our third century.

Don Greame Kelley, *former editor (1971–1975) of* Oceans *magazine and author of* Edge of a Continent, *is currently writing a book on the maritime history of the Pacific Coast.*

The Cowboy
(Continued from page 53)

run into black voids stippled with badger and prairie-dog holes, popping slickers to turn the herd in the illumination of lightning that crackled off the horns of the frenzied brutes; lightning that melted bits in horses' mouths and burnt the shoes off hooves.

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Jack Burrows *is an instructor of American history at San Jose State College, California.*

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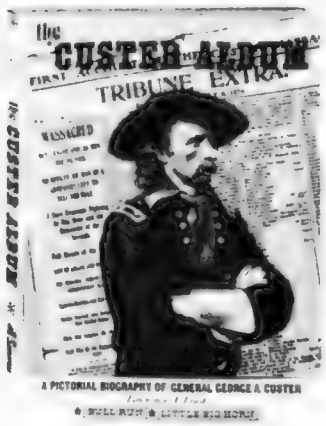

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Fine California Views & Logging the Redwoods

REVIEWED BY JAMES K. FOLSOM

BACON REMINDS US that some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, still others chewed and digested. Most of the volumes reviewed on these pages fall into the latter category and, although nourishing, are—like sourdough biscuits—often heavy. As a change of diet, *Fine California Views* and *Logging the Redwoods* have much to be said for them. Both are handsome volumes depending for much of their effect on their excellent photographs; neither is hagridden by a "thesis" of overriding importance, and each is primarily descriptive rather than analytical.

Fine California Views: The Photographs of A. W. Ericson by Peter E. Palmquist *(Interface California, Eureka, 1975; 111 pp., intro., illus., notes, $20.95).*

Logging the Redwoods by Lynwood Carranco and John T. Labbe *(Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho, 1975; 145 pp., illus., maps, index, $14.95).*

Fine California Views attempts to bring the work of photographer A. W. Ericson before a wider audience than it has hitherto enjoyed. Palmquist has combined ninety-two of the nearly six hundred extant Ericson photographs into an excellent portfolio. He has written short captions for each photograph and, in an introductory essay, has added a brief chronological biography. This essay is a useful document for, as Palmquist points out, Ericson's life is, if anything, less well known than his photographs.

Ericson's photographs themselves are the heart of the volume, and their selection posed real problems to the author. It is probably inevitable for any reader already acquainted with Ericson's work to be somewhat disappointed that Palmquist's final choices do not mirror his own preferences. None of Ericson's studio portraits is included, and—at least to this reviewer's taste—more of Ericson's pictures of Native Americans might have been added while some of the fine California views could safely have been eliminated. But no editor can please everyone, and Palmquist's selections, taken as a whole, make an impressive portfolio that offers both a balanced picture of Ericson's long, fruitful work and, equally importantly, a photographic selection of excellent aesthetic quality.

Palmquist remarks that Ericson's redwood photographs alone could "provide the basis for another book" about "early logging," and in a sense they have done so in *Logging the Redwoods*, for many of the photographs therein are his. Happily, there are very few duplications within the two volumes, and the Ericson buff as well as the student of the redwood industry need have no hesitation about purchasing both. *Logging the Redwoods* has a happy schizophrenic quality that reflects the interests of its two authors in the methods of logging and—somewhat surprisingly—in early railroads. This unlikely amalgam has produced a fascinating and loving study of the past in which, for a refreshing change, things themselves are more important than what they symbolize. Aside from an occasional debatable statement that logging has had little ecological significance, the book is devoid of any social comment whatever. Readers interested primarily in conservation matters or in labor history will have to look elsewhere. But the reader's curiosity about how a donkey engine actually *worked* will be satisfied in chapter 6 which contains, among other things, a patent drawing for the original Dolbeer Logging Engine. And if one wonders why the California Western Railroad's passenger trains are called "Super Skunks" he can find the answer, together with a picture of the original "Skunk." Admittedly, in the ultimate scheme of things, none of this is of primary importance; yet it is fascinating stuff nevertheless.

Both volumes, to return to Bacon, are well worth tasting. Like good desserts they satisfy without cloying.

James K. Folsom, *a student of western American literature, is professor of English at the University of Colorado in Boulder.*

An American Bestiary: Notes of an Amateur Naturalist

REVIEWED BY ROBERT M. PYLE

THIS REVEALING and useful compendium might more accurately be titled *Some New Mexico Mammals: Library Notes of an Amateur Naturalist*. While the ancient bestiaries upon which this book is mildly modeled included practically everything real and unreal, Mr. Schaefer selects just a few of his favorites in the area he knows. And if the reader expects from the subtitle to find a trove of original nature observations, he will be disappointed; nearly all the reportage here comes from "book-learning" rather than field encounters. One wishes for more of the latter, since the author clearly is a gifted observer and the few sentences he allows for his own perceptions are far more engaging than his innumerable quotes from Vernon Bailey and Oliver Goldsmith.

An American Bestiary : Notes of an Amateur Naturalist by Jack Schaefer with a foreword by James S. Findley *(Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1975; 287 pp., illus., $10.00).*

Nonetheless, the sources behind this soup-pot are diverse and thorough, and they have been employed with verve and judgment. One may read an opinion of Aristotle, followed by the latest theory from the mammalogy texts. The natural histories of peccaries, pronghorns, big cats, ringtails, bats, armadilloes, shrews, hares, opossums, gophers, porcupines, and kangaroo rats come forth in formula chapters which go like this: Provocative introduction, mythic and scientific history, taxonomic review, evolutionary sketch, discussion of biogeography, ecology and adaptive strategy, relationship to humans, deprecatory comment about humans, and closing philosophical thought. This adds up to portraits of some depth which, if repetitive, certainly increases one's acquaintance with a remarkable association of mammals. Unfortunately, the whole suffers from environmental clichés and a cloying, condescending anthropomorphism.

It is sad that all of these animals which the author cares so much about are doomed by his pen to extinction—for they seem to occur in the male gender only. Mr. Schaefer, the skilled author of *Shane* and other westerns, seems loathe to leave his cowboy macho back on the ranch. Weaknesses notwithstanding, this volume embodies such a marvelous human-wildlife ethic that it could only help our rich and maligned Southwest, if widely read and adopted by citizens of that region.

Robert M. Pyle *is a freelance writer and a doctoral candidate in the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.*

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Old San Francisco: The Biography of a City from Early Days to the Earthquake by Doris Muscatine *(Putnam, New York, 1975; 480 pp., intro., illus., maps, biblio., notes, index, $12.95).*

REVIEWED BY RUSTIE BROWN

THIS REVIEWER likes facts and anecdotes, and this book has plenty of both. The reader learns, for example, that the Spaniards introduced irrigation to California and that the term "barn dance" was derived from "bran" dance. The most bizarre fact encountered may be that California once had a camel mail express. It was a total disaster. The beasts knew no English, and the drivers knew no Arabic.

The life-style of nineteenth-century San Francisco was conditioned by the mines. Rugged individuals emerged who had already been through the mill. As the heterogeneous population expressed it, they had "seen the elephant," survived, and were equipped to face anything. San Francisco suffered six devastating fires between June and December of 1851. Each time fire forced the disorderly city to rebuild, there was a lessening of architectural confusion.

By 1900, San Francisco, with 342,000 inhabitants, was the ninth largest community in the country. Then, according to the author, fate, in the form of the 1906 earthquake, brought San Francisco to ruin in only twenty-eight seconds. Oscar Lewis in *San Francisco —Mission to Metropolis* said the earthquake lasted forty seconds, with a ten-second pause, then continued for another twenty-five seconds. William Bronson, in *The Earth Shook, the Sky Burned,* agreed. One would assume Ms. Muscatine had her facts straight; *quien sabe?*

This reviewer's only criticism is that the volume could have been condensed by about a hundred pages without harm. At any rate, San Francisco's spirit was never annihilated by fires or earthquakes. As one citizen expressed it, "The dem [*sic*] place seems shaky on her pins, but there's one consolation, we've got the best climate in the world."

Rustie Brown *is a freelance writer and author of the forthcoming book* The Titanic, The Psychic, and the Sea.

American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation by John F. Reiger *(Winchester Press, New York, 1975; intro., illus., notes, biblio., index, $10.00).*

REVIEWED BY LARRY ZELENAK

THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT in America was foreshadowed late in the nineteenth century by a few "prophets," such as John Wesley Powell and John Muir, and set into high gear early in this century by Gifford Pinchot, Stephen Mather, and a host of other bureaucrats—or so goes the standard interpretation. That traditional view has been challenged, however, by John F. Reiger, who claims that "American sportsmen, those who hunted and fished for pleasure . . . were the real spearhead of conservation."

This may come as a surprise to those who believe that hunters are interested only in destroying wildlife. It can be convincingly argued, however, that hunters had as great an interest as anyone in preserving America's woodlands and wildlife. If there were no woods, there would be no animals. And if there were no animals, there would be no hunting.

Reiger traces the beginnings of the conservation movement back to the 1870s and the founding of three national newspapers for hunters and fishermen—*American Sportsman, Forest and Stream,* and *Field and Stream.* These papers, which gave the idea of conserving natural resources through scientific management its first widespread publicity, deserve much of the credit for the elimination of commercial hunting, as well as for the establishment of the national park and national forest systems.

Over forty pages of footnotes, along with a comprehensive bibliography, lend impressive documentation to Reiger's thesis. Although he is occasionally guilty of slighting the efforts of non-hunting conservationists, Reiger has produced a valuable study of a widely misunderstood chapter of American history.

Larry Zelenak *is a recent editorial intern for* THE AMERICAN WEST *and attends the University of Santa Clara, California.*

Eminent Women of the West by Elinor Richey *(Howell-North, Berkeley, 1975; 276 pp., intro., illus., biblio., index, $7.95).*

REVIEWED BY MARY NELLE KAINER

IT TAKES a talented biographer to cull through a person's past for the relevant details and events which shaped that life. Elinor Richey is such an author and has proven it nine times over in this significant study of important western women. She is ever true to her task of examining both the personal and historical facts that influenced each of her subjects.

The nine western women included in the collection were innovators and creators in their respective fields. Gertrude Atherton's novels, full of strong-willed women, shocked readers of the day. Gertrude Stein explored writing the same way she explored life and left a style and technique that still influence writers. Isadora Duncan danced her way to fame, while Imogene Cunningham became internationally recognized as an outstanding photographer. Sarah Winnemucca was a Paiute leader who never ceased working for a better life for the Indians.

Suffrage and equal rights were the political arenas for Abigail Scott Duniway of Oregon and for Jeannette Rankin, the first Congresswoman. Julia Morgan was a respected architect who designed the Hearst mansion San Simeon, as well as many of the YWCA centers of the country. Florence Sabin was a pioneer in medical research.

Although these talented women all led diverse and individual lives, they had a common denominator—their western heritage. They were contemporaries during the late 1800s and early 1900s, a period of unique freedom in the budding West, when other parts of the United States were still firmly under the grip of the Victorian influence.

Eminent Women of the West makes us proud of our western foremothers who were ahead of their times in many respects. Elinor Richey's writing is a treat for the mind.

Mary Nelle Kainer *is a freelance writer, a former newspaper reporter, and a writing teacher.*

Allan Nevins on History, compiled and introduced by Ray Allen Billington *(Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1975; 420 pp., index, $15.00).*

REVIEWED BY C. L. SONNICHSEN

IN VIEW OF the current interest in the use of quantitative methods in history (see *American Historical Review,* vol. 80, April 1975), this posthumous collection of essays by Allan Nevins is particularly timely. Nevins believed, as his editor says, that history is "mankind's most essential instrument for progress" and that a "writer with literary talents and transmittable enthusiasm accomplishes more than a 'scientific' scholar whose labored quest for complete objectivity" repels the reader. Quantifiers are needed, but they are likely to "instill an aridly mechanical view of the universe."

Nevins thought history should have emotional impact. He himself always felt an "explosive excitement" in his subject. After earning his M.A. at Illinois University (he never bothered to go on to a Ph.D.), he dallied briefly with journalism. He then switched to history and taught at Columbia University until 1958, when he retired to become senior research associate at the Huntington Library. Throughout his professional life he wrote voluminously, his greatest achievement being the eight-volume *Ordeal of the Union,* which won the $10,000 Scribner's Centenary Prize and the prestigious Bancroft Award. He reaped two Pulitzer Prizes and many additional honors and distinctions while teaching, lecturing, directing graduate work, and finding new ways to advance the cause of history. He launched Columbia's program in oral history in 1948 and was the real founder of *American Heritage* magazine.

After Nevins's death, Ray Allen Billington, his friend and successor, undertook to edit this selection from his published and unpublished essays. If, as his editor notes, there is "little new" for the professional historian, the four hundred pages are rich in ideas, charged with enthusiasm, and full of the wisdom of a scholar and humanist.

C. L. Sonnichsen *is editor of* The Journal of Arizona History.

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BOTANICAL COLUMBUS

(Continued from page 51)

Douglas faced more difficulties on the way back to Fort Vancouver: "We returned nearly by the same way we had come, in twelve days' hard labour, with great misery, hunger, rain, and cold: but what gave me most pain was the nearly total loss of my collections crossing the River Sandiam [Santiam], one of the tributaries of the Multnomah [Willamette]."

Hostile Indians, privation, and accident were not Douglas's only troubles in the Northwest. His most serious handicap was his own eyesight. Sun-glare and wind-blown sand were aggravating a chronic eye condition and causing permanent damage to his vision, making it impossible on occasion for him even to see what he was writing in his journal.

After a stay of nearly two years on the Columbia, David Douglas departed Fort Vancouver for England on March 20, 1827. The trip home was to be as exhausting as any of his botanical adventures in the Northwest: he was traveling overland with the annual Hudson's Bay express, going by canoe up the Columbia, then on foot and by snowshoe across the Canadian Rockies all the way to Hudson's Bay, with stops en route at Jasper House, Fort Assiniboine, Fort Edmonton, and Fort Garry.

Crossing snow-covered, 5,700-foot Athabaska Pass on the Continental Divide, Douglas "became desirous of ascending one of the peaks, and accordingly I set out alone on snowshoes to that on the left hand or west side. . . ." Five hours of determined effort brought him to the summit of the 9,100-foot peak, which he named Mount Brown in honor of an eminent British botanist: "The sensation I felt is beyond what I can give utterance to. Nothing, as far as the eye could perceive, but mountains such as I was on, and many higher, some rugged beyond description, striking the mind with horror blended with a sense of the wondrous works of the Almighty." This is the first known ascent of a peak in the northern Rockies.

On August 20 the express reached York Factory, having completed the three thousand mile crossing of North America in exactly six months. By his own reckoning, David Douglas had hiked, traveled by horseback, and paddled by canoe over seven thousand miles throughout the Pacific Northwest in two years, a record probably not equalled by any other white man up to that time.

EXHAUSTED BY HIS TRAVELS and ill from a near-fatal boating accident in Hudson's Bay, David Douglas arrived back in England in October of 1827 aboard the fur company's ship *Prince of Wales*. From the great store of seeds and plants he had sent ahead and carried with him, the Horticultural Society succeeded in raising 210 species in its gardens, of which 130 were subsequently sent all over the world.

Honors were showered on Douglas for his achievement. He was elected a fellow of three learned bodies—the Linnean Society, the Zoological Society, and the Geological Society—and found himself an honored guest in London parlors and committee rooms.

For a time Douglas seemed to enjoy his fame, but before long he became bored and even irritated by it all. Uncomfortable in society, he was by nature a roamer and adventurer. Great was his joy and relief when the Horticultural Society arranged to send him off on a second expedition to the western coast of North America. He was to travel by way of the Horn and the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands and —in addition to revisiting the Northwest—concentrate his attentions on the flora of California. Again the guest of the Hudson's Bay Company, Douglas would in addition be sponsored by the Zoological Society and the British Colonial Office. With the assistance of Capt. Edward Sabine of the Royal Society, Douglas was equipped with a magnificent set of astronomical and magnetic instruments, and spent his last weeks in England mastering the intricacies of their operation.

Douglas sailed for America in the Hudson's Bay ship *Eagle* on October 31, 1829—and never saw his homeland again.

After an eight month voyage he was back in the Northwest, and soon had retraced many of the collecting jaunts of his previous visit. This time, however, in addition to botanizing, Douglas obtained a variety of zoological specimens, made hundreds of astronomical observations and calculations (so as to assist government mapmakers in fixing the geographical locations of points in the region), and collected magnetic data for his friend Captain Sabine. By November of 1830, having accumulated three chests of seeds and over a hundred new species of plants (including six previously unknown pines), he decided it was time to move on to California. Judging an overland journey too hazardous because of hostility on the part of the Indians, Douglas caught a southbound ship and arrived in Monterey in December.

Douglas was enchanted by California—by its rich flora, the kindness of the inhabitants, and the hospitality and assistance given him by the Franciscan friars who, to use his own words, "loved the sciences too well to think it curious to see one go so far in quest of grass."

He found the spring season unbelievably beautiful, but discovered he had to work fast before the heat parched up the vegetation. In his first year in California Douglas recorded and collected a number of unknown genera and over eight hundred species, many of them new to the botanical world. He found a number of new pines, the Monterey cypress, fine species of the mariposa lily, new species of evening primrose, bush poppy, lupins, quinine bush, wild heliotrope, and the California bluebell.

It is interesting to note that in the soil attached to the roots of some of the plants Douglas sent to London, horticulturists found tiny flakes of gold. This was in 1831, seventeen years before the California Gold Rush! Douglas himself noticed these flecks of yellow and knew them to be gold, but for some unknown reason seems to have attached little significance to them. Had he been a geologist instead of a botanist, perhaps the history of California would have been much different.

After nineteen months of highly successful work, during which he visited most of the California missions and ranged as far north as Fort Ross, Douglas returned to the Columbia River via Hawaii, arriving in October of 1832.

Continuing his botanical, zoological, and scientific collecting and observations in the Northwest, Douglas laid final plans for his most ambitious botanizing adventure yet; one that he had been contemplating since before leaving England, and which would bring great fame if successful. He hoped to return home overland by way of Canada, Alaska, Siberia, and Russia—a grand tour never before attempted, and an undertaking that might require two or more years to complete. Already he had obtained letters of permission and encouragement from Baron Wrangel, governor of Alaska.

On March 20, 1833, without fully revealing his plans to his Hudson's Bay Company hosts, Douglas set off up the Columbia with the eastbound express. Transferring to horseback at Fort Okanogan, he joined a second brigade heading north into the wilds of New Caledonia (present-day British Columbia). By early June, having traveled by way of Fort Kamloops and the Fraser River, Douglas had managed to reach Fort St. James, an outpost deep in the interior and more than a thousand miles from Fort Vancouver. But here the young botanist's grand dream wilted and died.

Sitka still lay five hundred miles to the northwest, across a trackless wilderness never before crossed by white men. Douglas's eyesight was worsening—he was now completely blind in the right eye and had to wear dark glasses to protect the other. Guides could not be obtained, and when he heard that the Indians ahead were dangerously hostile, he became convinced that the odds were too great. For the first time in his career, David Douglas turned back.

Retreating down the Fraser River, the worn-out naturalist met with a final, stunning misfortune. Douglas's canoe was wrecked in a stretch of rapids, he was nearly drowned and then almost died from exposure, and his notes, diary, and collection of four hundred botanical specimens were lost. Damaged in body and spirit, Douglas was completely exhausted by the time he reached Fort Vancouver in August of 1833. After three months he very reluctantly came to the conclusion that he must return to England, being no longer fit to continue the arduous work of a field collector.

Douglas decided to return home via the Sandwich Islands, and in October obtained passage out of the Columbia River aboard a Hudson's Bay ship. He paused briefly in San Francisco, which according to his notes then consisted only of "a few delapidated buildings." Douglas camped and botanized on an eminence which is now located approximately in the center of the modern-day city.

Arriving in the Sandwich Islands, Douglas thoroughly enjoyed his last fling as an active field botanist. He found many interesting ferns, mosses, and lichens; and he traveled the islands in turn, making magnetic and geographical observations and climbing the major peaks and volcanoes.

While awaiting passage from Honolulu to England, the naturalist offered to show a visiting missionary the volcanic wonders on the Island of Hawaii. Boarding a coastal schooner, the two men obtained passage to Hilo, a village on the east coast of the island.

But fate had other plans. Impatient at the ship's slow progress as it beat its way around Hawaii's north shore, Douglas asked to be put ashore. He would reach Hilo via overland trail, a three- or four-day journey that promised interesting opportunities for exploration and botanizing. On his third evening ashore, Douglas reached the home of a hunter of the island's numerous wild cattle, where he remained for the night. Setting out the next morning, he was warned by his host that three cattle traps—deep pits covered with light brushwood—lay a few miles ahead along the trail.

The cattle trapper was the last known person to see Douglas alive. Later that day two natives heard fierce bellowing coming from one of the pits. They looked down and saw a terrified wild bull trapped in the hole . . . and also the half-buried, mangled body of David Douglas.

How such an experienced backwoodsman as Douglas came to fall into the trap—especially as he had been warned of its exact location—has never been satisfactorily explained. Some people have suggested that Douglas's poor eyesight was the cause; and not a few believed he was deliberately pushed into the pit. Following an inconclusive inquest, Douglas's remains were buried in Honolulu.

Thus ended, on July 12, 1834, at the early age of thirty-four, the active, fruitful life of a botanical Columbus to whom Americans and Englishmen alike owe tribute—"Douglas of the Fir."

FOR FURTHER READING

The basic work for anyone interested in the life and work of David Douglas is undoubtedly the day-by-day diary he kept with such methodical care when in the field. Published in 1914 by the Royal Horticultural Society, London, under the title *Journal Kept by David Douglas during his Travels in North America, 1823–1827,* it has since been reprinted and contains a list of all the trees and plants he introduced.

For fascinating narrative accounts of this dedicated plant hunter's life, one cannot do better than refer to either A. G. Harvey's *Douglas of the Fir: A Biography of David Douglas, Botanist* (Harvard University, 1947) or William Morwood's *Traveler in a Vanished Landscape: The Life and Times of David Douglas* (Clarkson N. Potter, 1973).

Trevor Holloway *of Westbury, Wiltshire, England, is a full-time free-lance writer specializing in the fields of nature and conservation.*

MATTER OF OPINION

(Continued from page 52)

first pursuit by Mexicans and later the predictable, rabid reaction of those in the safer East who knew little of the hostile tribes' fury but a lot of sociology.

In 1876, with Custer's command butchered and the nation gripped by anxiety for revenge and re-establishing white suzerainty on the northern Plains, MacKenzie was sent after the Northern Cheyenne, who had participated considerably in the annihilation on the Little Bighorn.

Here is how Maj. Gen. George Crook's biographer, John Bourke, described the issue of that mission in his *On the Border with Crook:*

"In the gray twilight of a cold November morning, MacKenzie with the cavalry and Indian scouts burst like a tornado upon the unsuspecting village of the Cheyennes at the head of Willow Creek, a tributary of the Powder, and wiped it from the face of the earth."

It is easy and cheap now to moralize about the Indian wars. This is 1976, not 1876. (Though the looting, murder, and arson of the frontier have been recreated in some urban areas.) Whatever the rights and wrongs then, for absolute accomplishment of mission, no American officer of the "horseback" Indian-war era ever approached the success standards of Ranald MacKenzie. Whether one admires or detests what he did, he achieved it with an effectiveness rivaled in our war history only by Sherman and by George Patton, who also believed in eviscerating the opposition and leaving the moralities to people far behind the battle.

A MATTER OF OPINION *is provided as an open forum. Contributions from our readers are invited, but should be limited to 750 words and must be signed.*

I WAS A COWBOY ONCE

(Continued from page 17)

sorrowful look, knowing I was going to abuse her baby. I then let the calf in to its mother. Or rather, we both dove for the mother. I was on the right side with the bucket. The calf was on the left. The battle of the teats was under way. Two for the calf and two for me.

I milked my two as fast as I could, knowing that if the calf finished first it would jump my claim—which it always did. When that happened I would knock its head back, but it would return to be knocked back again. Eventually it would get down real low and look up at me from under the cow's belly with those baleful eyes. I felt so ashamed; I knew I wouldn't enjoy the biscuits after I had made them.

The following day I went without breakfast, but by noon could hold out no longer. I took out the cookbook and turned to "biscuits."

Into a wooden bowl I put the specified amount of flour, then other things, mixed them up, and poured in the milk. I stirred with a spoon but it didn't make dough—just got all mixed and messed up. Nothing that I did would turn the trick, so what the hell, I poured the stuff into the pan anyway and shoved it into the oven, then put more manure into the firebox. As the stove heated, the dough swelled and pretty soon there was more in the oven than on the pan. The overflow began to smoke. Eventually I considered my biscuit done and opened the oven.

There was so much smoke I couldn't find the pan. Perseverance won out at last, and finally I got the pan on top of the stove. Using a butcher knife I cut the biscuit into squares like you sometimes do cornbread. Upon lifting out one of my squares the biscuit sort of fell apart. This problem was solved by dipping the rest out with a spoon. It was all crumbly, so I poured molasses on it and ate it anyway. It didn't exactly taste delicious, but it certainly was filling.

Later in the afternoon, a lone rider was spotted approaching a mile or so away. It began to look as though I was going to have company. And so I was. It was a cattleman my brother had sent to take some cattle out the next day. So I had my first overnight guest. I would offer him biscuit with molasses for supper and, later, bedbugs as sleeping companions.

After we had talked a while and got acquainted, I guided the conversation around to kitchen procedure—just feeling him out. After getting the impression that he knew more about kitchen things than I did, I confessed that I was somewhat like a blushing bride and didn't know how to make biscuits yet. I showed him the results of my efforts. He laughed and took over the kitchen. He showed me how to make biscuit.

"First thing you do," he said, "is throw that damn book away."

Then he mixed this with that and added some of the other, and two pinches of something else—and there was the dough. I had learned more about cooking from this cowhand in ten minutes than I could have learned from the book in a year.

The next morning as I stood on the front porch and watched the man ride away, I wondered if I had at last become truly attuned to life on the western plains. I wasn't too sure. In the meantime there was a little white-faced calf looking longingly through the fence at its mother. I opened the gate and let it in—I would eat leftovers tomorrow.

C. T. Gilbreath *of Tustin, California (having been pressed by us for some biographical information), responds that he has been "for fifty years a student of history. His writings know no limits as to time or location: if it is interesting he writes about it."*

PORTRAIT FOR A WESTERN ALBUM

(Continued from page 26)

beyond description. It was a foam, a fury that drowned out even thought. It finished us. My friend lost his nerve and his mind completely. He dropped his oars. His boat swamped."

Loper managed to get Russell to shore, but in doing so both boats were lost. The only way now left to return to civilization was to walk to Hite, more than a hundred miles back up the river.

Loper later described the ordeal: "The days were blazing hells of heat, with the temperature around 114 degrees. Our feet were raw and blistered. Our water was gone the first night. Our tongues swelled, and each step was torment. The man was a raving maniac by that time. I had to lead him. Luckily a July rain fell the second night, or our bones would be there yet." Though the men reached safety, Russell never fully recovered. Taken to a state mental hospital shortly afterwards, he died there.

It was in Hite that Loper met the only person who could rival the river for his affections: Rachel Jamison, an eighteen-year-old beauty who understood and shared his love for the Colorado. Their honeymoon was one which only a river rat could appreciate. By horseback and boat the couple made their way along the Green and Colorado rivers from Green River to Moab, camping six months without setting eyes on another human being. "It was quite a honeymoon," Loper chuckled later. "Gave us a good chance to get acquainted."

By 1920 Loper was well known for his expertise on the Colorado, and when the U.S. Government started preliminary surveys for Boulder Dam, it engaged Loper to guide the engineers down the river. For many years afterwards, Loper served as head boatman for the government.

Only once did the government men get a dunking. In 1939, although he was already sixty-nine years old, Loper and his protege, Don Harris, led two geologists from Hite to Lees Ferry. In the final seventeen-mile stretch of the trip they hit more than seventeen rapids that dropped an average of twelve feet each. They spilled once, and Loper admitted sheepishly that he was at fault. "My companions wanted a thrill while we were passing some tame rapids, and I began to act up. We took a dunking, but it wasn't serious."

The incident didn't mar his reputation, and a few years later the grizzled old veteran led a group of Boy Scouts on one of the most exciting trips any troop ever experienced. To Bert, the hardest part of the journey wasn't navigating the rapids—it was watching his language. "I have spent much of my life in the rough among rough people, and there are times that my language is something not to be repeated in the presence of Boy Scouts or ladies, but I sure had the bridle on during the trip," he wrote afterwards.

Even his mandatory retirement from government service when he reached seventy years of age didn't stop Loper. For him, river running was no longer just a pastime or a job, it was a way of life. "Those trips are all that have kept me alive since coming to Salt Lake in 1926," he once explained. And, if the river couldn't stop him, age surely wouldn't. "They tell me I'm too old for this kind of thing," he said just before leaving on a ten-day voyage down the river to celebrate his seventieth birthday. "But I'll do it again when I'm eighty."

SHORTLY BEFORE his eightieth birthday, Loper made plans for another run down the Colorado, disregarding advice from four doctors who had agreed he'd never survive the trip. On July 7, 1949, Loper, Don Harris, and seven passengers launched their boats at Lees Ferry, planning to reach Lake Mead in about a week.

During a lunch break on the second day, Loper sat on the sandy bank, gazing down the twisting river. Howard Welty, one of the passengers, sat next to him, listening to Loper tell "how he loved the river and how he wished he could be buried somewhere along it."

Resuming their journey, the travelers passed Twenty-Four-Mile Rapid without difficulty. But as they entered the next series of rapids, another passenger, D. Wayne Nichol, noticed that Loper "was not using his oars but was sitting transfixed. I called to him and asked him to get the boat under control. In the fourth wave trough the boat was completely capsized. . . . It was while I was whirling in the eddy that I saw Bert Loper's body floating by, face up, eyes closed . . . apparently he was dead."

Bert Loper's body disappeared into the river he loved. His boat, smashed in the rapids, was tossed into shallow water. The men dragged it to a sandy beach above the high-water line and secured it to a mesquite tree. Placing an oar upright in a cairn of large rocks, they inscribed on it an epitaph: "Bert Loper, the Grand Old Man of the Colorado."

For twenty-six years, Loper's remains lay hidden by the river. In April of 1975, however, a hiker stumbled over bleached and water-smoothed bones. From the location of the remains—well above the current high-water mark—Grand Canyon rangers knew the body had been carried there before construction of the Glen Canyon Dam; with the assistance of an anthropologist at the Museum of Northern Arizona, the bones were identified as those of the Grand

Bert Loper's earthly remains were sent home to Salt Lake and laid next to his wife Rachel, who had passed away only one month before. It seemed to many that the river had purposely kept Loper in its embrace until her death: until a time when he could return to the only one he had loved as much as the river itself.

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Membership in the Western History Association is open to anyone interested in the history and culture of the American West. Inquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, William D. Rowley, Department of History, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada 89507. Membership is on a calendar-year basis and includes THE AMERICAN WEST and WESTERN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY. Annual dues are: Regular Member $16.00; Sustaining Member $30.00; Student Member & Emeritus Member $10.00 (includes only the WESTERN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY and Annual Conference material); Sponsoring Member $100.00 (Institution); Life Member $300.00, paid in a twelve-month period. Individuals or institutions not wishing to become members may subscribe directly to either THE AMERICAN WEST or the WESTERN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY at regular subscription rates.

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Forthcoming in THE AMERICAN WEST

Almost from the beginning, westerners have enjoyed a special relationship with the magnificent world of nature surrounding them. In a forthcoming American West pictorial, we celebrate one aspect of that relationship—views from the early days of **Western Mountaineering,** with often humorous scenes of climbers on ice and mountain peak.

The arrival of the motor car three-quarters of a century ago added a new dimension to vacation travel in the West. The going was not all roses, however, as demonstrated by Pat Jones in **Foote's Ford and the Silver Cup,** a narrative of one of the first motorcar trips to the crest of the Sierra.

Participants in today's "recreational vehicle" explosion may be surprised by what they find in another forthcoming pictorial. A lighthearted portfolio of vintage views, with accompanying narrative by T. H. Watkins, illustrates that the heritage of the **Camper, Vacation Trailer, and Motor Home** is almost as old as that of the automobile.

Other wide-ranging articles in forthcoming issues include a tour of recently restored **Old-Town Sacramento,** California, conducted by photographer-writer Lee Foster, and an armchair visit to the splendors of **Glacier Bay National Monument,** Alaska, with Annie Talabere.